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Friedrika Bræmer.

THE NEIGHBOURS

A

STORY OF EVERY-DAY LIFE

BY

FREDERIKA BREMER

TRANSLATED BY

MARY HOWITT



LONDON
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1901

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PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

OF the rich treasure of intellect and literature in Sweden, little or nothing is known in England. To give a specimen of what exists there, even in the department of living story and scenes of society, I have selected this work of Frederika Bremer, which is one of a series. "The Neighbours" has not been first chosen on the principle of presenting the best first in order to excite expectation, but as believing it a fair and average example. Some of the others possess unquestionably a stronger interest in the narrative, and perhaps more masterly exposition of character. They are, in my opinion, most admirable in their lessons of social wisdom; in their life of relation; in their playful humour; and in all those qualities which can make writings acceptable to the fireside circle of the good and refined. Frederika Bremer is, indeed, the Miss AUSTIN of Sweden. Her father was an eminent merchant, and since the death of her parents she has resided alternately at Stockholm and

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with a female friend in the south of Sweden. She has consequently seen much of the society and scenery of her native land, and no one can sketch these with more graphic truth and vivacity. Since the writings of their great poet Tegnér, no productions have created such a sensation in Sweden; and abroad they have flown far and wide; have been read with avidity in various parts of the Continent, and in Germany alone three editions have appeared in rapid succession.

I take this opportunity to announce that if my own countrymen, and especially countrywomen, give this work an equal welcome, the others are ready for publication, and will be issued as speedily as may be required. In any case, I shall be grateful to the Author for the perusal of them, for they have certainly both highly amused me and done my heart good.

M. H.

1852.

THE NEIGHBOURS.

CHAPTER I.

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M— --

Rosenvick, 1st June, 18—

HERE I am now, dear Maria, in my own house and home, at my own writing-table, and sitting by my own Bear. And who is Bear? you probably ask: who should it be but my own husband, whom I call Bear because the name suits him so well.

Here then I am, sitting by the window; the sun is setting; two swans swim on the lake, and furrow its clear mirror; three cows, my cows, stand on the green shore quite sleek and reflective, thinking certainly upon nothing. How handsome they are! Now comes the maid with her stool and milk-pail; how rich and good is country milk! but what, in fact, is not good in the country? air and men, food and feeling, heaven and earth, all is fresh and animated.

But now I must conduct you into my dwelling—no, I will begin yet further off. There, on that hill, in Småland, several miles off, whence I first looked into the valley where Rosenvik lies, behold a dust-covered carriage, within which sits the Bear and his wife. That wife looks forth with curiosity, for before her lies a valley beautiful in the light of evening. Green woods stretch out below, and surround crystal lakes; corn-fields in silken waves encircle grey mountains; and white buildings gleam out with friendly aspects among the trees. Here and there, from the wood-covered heights, pillars of smoke ascend to the clear evening heaven; they might have been mistaken for volcanoes, but they were only peaceful

svedjor.* Truly it was beautiful, and I was charmed ; I bent myself forward, and was thinking on a certain happy natural family in Paradise, one Adam and Eve, when suddenly the Bear laid his great paws upon me, and held me so tight that I was nearly giving up the ghost, while he kissed me and besought me to find pleasure in what was here. I was the least in the world angry, but as I knew the heart-impulse of this embrace, I made myself tolerably contented.

Here then, in this valley, lay my stationary home, here lived my new family, here lay Rosenvik, here should I live with my Bear. We descended the hill, and the carriage rolled rapidly along the level road, while as we advanced he told whose property was this and whose was that, whether near or remote. All was to me like a dream, out of which I was suddenly awoke by his saying with a peculiar accent, "Here lives Ma chère mère ;" and at the same moment the carriage drove into a court-yard, and drew up at the door of a large, handsome, stone house.

"What, must we alight here?" I asked.

"Yes, my love," was his reply.

This was to me by no means an agreeable surprise ; I would much rather have gone on to my own house ; much rather have made some preparation for this first meeting with my husband's step-mother, of whom I stood in great awe from the anecdotes I had heard of her, and the respect which I saw that Bear had for her. This visit seemed to me quite mal-à-propos, but Bear had his own ideas, and as I glanced at him I saw that it was no time for opposition.

It was Sunday, and as the carriage drew up I heard the sound of a violin.

"Aha," said Bear, "so much the better!" leaped heavily from the carriage, and helped me out also. There was no time to think about boxes or packages ; he took my hand and led me up the steps, along the entrance hall, and drew me towards the door, whence proceeded the sounds of music and dancing.

"Only see," thought I, "now I shall probably have even to dance in this costume."

Oh, if I could only have gone in somewhere, just to wipe

* Svedjor, the burning of turf in the fields, which in many parts of Sweden is used for dressing the land.

the dust from my face and my bonnet, where at the very least I could just have seen myself in a looking-glass! But impossible! Bear led me by the arm, insisting that I looked most charmingly, and beseeching me to make a looking-glass of his eyes. I was obliged to be so very uncourteous as to reply that they were quite too small for that purpose; on which account he declared they were only the brighter, and then opened the door of the ball-room.

"Now," exclaimed I, in a kind of lively despair, "if you take me to a ball, you Bear, I'll make you dance with me."

"With a world of pleasure!" cried he; and in the same moment we two stood in the hall, when my terror was considerably abated by finding that the great room contained merely a number of cleanly dressed servants, men and women, who leapt about lustily with one another, and who were so occupied with their dancing as scarcely to perceive us. Bear led me to the upper end of the room, and there I saw sitting upon a high seat a very tall and strong-built gentlewoman, apparently fifty years of age, who was playing with remarkable fervour upon a large violin, and beating time to her music with great power. Upon her head was a tall and extraordinary cap of black velvet, which I may as well call a helmet, because this idea came into my head at the first glance, and after all I can find no better name for it. She looked handsome but singular. This was the Generalska (wife of the General) Mansfelt, this was the step-mother of my husband, this was *Ma chère mère!*

She turned instantly her large dark-brown eyes upon us, ceased playing, laid down her violin, and arose with a proud bearing, but with, at the same time, a happy and open countenance. Bear led me forward; I trembled a little, made a deep curtsey, and kissed her hand; in return she kissed my forehead, and for a moment looked on me so keenly as compelled me to cast down my eyes, whereupon she kissed me most cordially on mouth and forehead, and embraced me as warmly as her step-son. And now came his turn; he kissed her hand most reverentially, but she presented her cheek; they regarded each other with the most friendly expression of countenance, she saying in a loud manly voice the moment afterwards: "You are welcome, my dear friends; it is very handsome of you to come here to me before you have

been to your own house ; I thank you for it. I might, it is true, have received you better, if I could have made preparations ; but at all events, this I know, that ‘ a welcome is the best dish.’ I hope, my friends, that you will remain till evening with me.”

Bear excused us, saying that he wished to reach home soon ; that I was fatigued with the journey : but that we could not pass Carlsfors without paying our respects to Ma chère mère.

“ Nay, good, good !” said she, apparently satisfied, “ we will soon have more talk within, but first I must speak a few words with these people here. Listen, good friends !” and Ma chère mère struck the back of the violin with the bow till general silence prevailed through the hall. “ My children,” continued she, in a solemn tone, “ I have something to say to you,—ounds ! wilt thou not be quiet there below,—I have to tell you that my beloved son Lars Anders Werner takes home his wife, this Fransiska Burén whom you see standing by his side. Marriages are determined in heaven, my children, and we will now pray heaven to bless its work in the persons of this couple. This evening we will drink together a skål* to their well-being. So now you can dance, my children ! Olof, come here, take the violin and play thy very best.”

While a murmur of exultation and good wishes ran through the assembly, Ma chère mère took me by the hand and led me, together with Bear, into another room, into which she ordered punch and glasses to be brought ; then placing both her elbows firmly upon the table and supporting her chin on her closed fists, she looked at me with a gaze which was rather dark than friendly. Bear, who saw that this review was rather embarrassing to me, began to speak of the harvest, and other country affairs ; Ma chère mère, however, sighed several times so deeply, that her sighs rather resembled groans, and then, as it were constraining herself, answered to his observations, and then as the punch came in she drank to us, and said, with earnestness in tone and countenance, “ Son, and son’s wife, your health !”

After this she became more friendly, and said in a jesting tone, which suited her extremely well, “ Lars Anders, I don’t

* Dricka Skål ; to drink a health. Skål is pronounced skoie, exactly with the same sound as sole, pole, etc.

think that any one can say ‘that you have bought the pig in the poke.’ Your wife does not look amiss, and she ‘has a pair of eyes to buy fish with.’ She is little, very little, one must confess, but ‘little and bold often push the great ones into the hold.’”

I laughed, Ma chère mère did the same, and I began to feel myself quite at home with her. We talked for some time very merrily together, and I related several little travelling adventures, which appeared to amuse her. In an hour’s time we rose to take our leave, and Ma chère mère said, with a most friendly smile, “However agreeable it is to me to see you, I will not detain you this evening. I can very well understand how the ‘at home’ draws you. Remain at home over to-morrow, if you will, but the day after come and eat your dinner with me; for the rest, you very well know that you will at all times be welcome. Now fill your glasses, and come and drink to the people. Trouble man may keep to himself, but pleasure he must enjoy in company.”

We followed with full glasses Ma chère mère, who had gone as herald into the dancing-room; they were all standing as we entered, and she spoke something after this manner: “One must never triumph before one is over the brook; but if people sail in the ship of matrimony with prudence and in the fear of God, there is a proverb which says, ‘Well begun is half won,’ and therefore, my friends, we will drink a skål to the new-married couple whom you see before you, and wish, not only for them, but for those who come after them, that they may for ever have place in the garden of the Lord!”

“Skål! skål!” resounded on all sides. Bear and I emptied our glasses, and then went round and shook hands with so many people that my head was quite dizzy.

All this over, we prepared for our departure, and then came Ma chère mère to me on the steps with a packet, or rather a bundle in her hand, saying, in the most friendly manner, “Take these veal cutlets with you, children, for breakfast to-morrow morning. In a while you will fatten and eat your own veal; but daughter-in-law don’t forget one thing, let me have my napkin back again! Nay, you shall not carry it, dear child, you have quite enough to do with your bag and your cloak. Lars Anders must carry the vea.

cutlets ;" and then, as if he were a little boy still, she gave him the bundle and showed him how he must carry it, all which he did as she bade him, and still her last words were " Don't forget now, that I have my napkin back !"

I glanced full of amazement at my husband, but he only smiled and helped me into the carriage. After all I was quite satisfied to have made the acquaintance of Ma chère mère in so impromptu a manner, for I felt that if it had been more solemn and premeditated, her bearing and her scrutiny would perhaps have had a more oppressive effect upon me.

Right glad was I about the veal cutlets, for I could not tell in what state I might find the provision-room finances at Rosenvik. Right glad also was I to arrive "at home," and to see a maid-servant and a ready-prepared bed, for we had travelled that day sixty English miles, and I was greatly fatigued. I had slept a little on the mile and quarter way between Carlsfors and Rosenvik, and the twilight had come on so rapidly that, as about eleven o'clock at night we arrived at home, I was unable to see what my Eden resembled. The house seemed, however, to me, somewhat grey and small in comparison of the one we had just left ; but that was of no consequence, Bear was so cordially kind, and I was so cordially sleepy. But all at once I was wide awake, for as I entered it seemed to me like a fairy tale. I stepped into a handsome well-lighted room, in the middle of which stood a nicely arranged tea-table glittering with silver and china, whilst beside the tea-table stood the very neatest of maid-servants, in that pretty holiday dress which is peculiar to the peasant girls of this country.

I uttered an exclamation of delight, and all sleep at once was gone. In a quarter of an hour I was quite ready, and sat down as hostess at the tea-table, admiring the beautiful tablecloth, the teacups, the teapot, the teaspoons, upon which were engraved our joint initials, and served tea to my Bear, who seemed happy to his heart's core.

And thus the morning and the evening were the first day.

The next morning, as I opened my eyes, I saw that my Adam was already wide awake, and was directing his eyes with an expression of great devotion towards the window where a ray of sunshine streamed in through a hole in the

blue-striped window curtains, whilst at the same time the mewing of a cat might be heard.

"My beloved husband!" began I, solemnly, "I thank you for the beautiful music which you have prepared for my welcome. I conjecture you have a troop of country girls all dressed in white to scatter twigs of fir before my feet. I will soon be ready to receive them."

"I have arranged something much better than this old-fashioned pageantry," said he, merrily. "In association with a great artist, I have prepared a panorama which will show you how it looks in Arabia Deserta. You need only to lift up these curtains."

You may imagine, Maria, that I was soon at the window—with a sort of secret dread drew aside the curtains. Ah, Maria! there lay before me, in the full glory of the morning, a crystal lake; green meadows and groves lay around, and in the middle of the lake a small island, upon which grew a magnificent oak; over all the sun shone brightly, and all was so peaceful, so paradisiacal in its beauty, that I was enchanted, and for the first moment could not speak, I could only fold my hands whilst tears filled my eyes.

"May you be happy here!" whispered Bear, and clasped me to his heart.

"I am happy, too happy!" said I, deeply moved, "and grateful."

"Do you see the island, that little Svan-ö?" asked he. "I will row you often there in summer; we will take our evening meal with us, and eat it there."

"Why not breakfast?" inquired I, suddenly fired with the idea—"why not to-day, in this beautiful morning, go and drink our coffee? I will immediately—"

"No, not this morning," interrupted he, laughing at my earnestness; "I must be off to the town to visit my patients."

"Ah!" exclaimed I, in a tone of vexation, "what a thing it is that people cannot remain in health!"

"What then should I do?" asked he, in a sort of comic terror.

"Row me over to Svan-ö," was my reply.

"I shall be back," said he, "for dinner about three o'clock, and then we can—that cursed hole there above," said he,

"I could not have believed that the curtains had been ~~sc~~
tor——"

"That hole shall remain as long as I am here," exclaimed I with enthusiasm, interrupting him ; "never would I forget that through that hole I first saw sunshine at Rosenvik ! But tell," inquired I, "what old fortress is that which one sees across the lake there, so grey in the distance ? There, where the wood is so black !"

"That is Ramm," replied he, "a great country-seat."

"And who lives there ?" I asked.

"Nobody, at this moment," he replied. "Fifteen years ago it belonged to Ma chère mère, but she did not find herself comfortable there, so she removed to Carlsfors and sold Ramm. The estate was purchased by peasants, who now cultivate the land, but let the fine house and park fall to decay. People say that at present it is rented for the summer by a foreigner, who wishes to hunt in the country ; and a fine opportunity has he to do so in the park itself, which is above six English miles in circuit, and in which, during their long undisturbed rest, game of all kind has wonderfully increased. Sometimes we will go and look about there ; but now, my little wife, I must have my breakfast, and then say farewell to thee for a few hours."

When coffee was ended, and he seated in his cabriolet, I began to make observations on my own little world—but of house and environs I will speak later, and first say something of the master of the house himself, because you, Maria, as yet know not my own Bear.

I have your letter before me, your dear letter, which I received a few days after my marriage. Thanks, beloved, good Maria, for all its cordial words—for all its good advice, which is well preserved where it will never be forgotten ; and now to your questions, which I will endeavour to answer fully. First of all for Bear—here then you have his portrait. Of a middle size, but proportionably, not disagreeably, stout and broad ; a handsome, well-curled peruke, made by the Creator's own hand ; large couleur de rose ; light eyelashes ; small, clear grey eyes, with a certain penetrating glance, under large bushy yellow-grey eyebrows ; the nose good, though somewhat thick ; the mouth large, with good teeth—

But brown, alas! from tobacco-smoking; large hands, but well made and well kept; large feet, the gait like a bear: but this gives no idea of his exterior, if you do not take into account an expression of open-hearted goodness and cheerfulness, which inspires a joyful confidence in the beholder. This speaks when the mouth is silent, as is most frequently the case; the forehead is serene, and the bearing of the head such as reminds one of an astronomer; the voice is a deep bass, which is not at all amiss in singing. Here then you have his exterior. His inward self, best Maria, I have not yet myself studied. Betrothed to him only within two months, wife since fourteen days, I have not had great opportunity to become acquainted with a man who is generally silent, and whom I have not known more than half a year. But I trust and hope all for good!

You ask whether I feel love, actual love for him, and give, half in jest, half in earnest, extraordinary signs by which I may be able to prove this. Whether I am sensible of an insupportable want when he is absent? whether I, like Madam L., become pale and embarrassed when he enters a company in which I am already? whether he has any fault, any bad habit which in another would be unpleasant to me, but which in him is agreeable! No, Maria, of all this I experience nothing: but understand, dear Maria, I can very well endure him; I certainly liked him, and found him an excellent man, otherwise I should not have married him; but love—hm!

In the first place, he is much older than I am; he is nearly fifty, and I want yet three years of thirty; further, he has been so long an old bachelor, has his good and his bad habits, and these last I do not find at all agreeable; but they shall not destroy our domestic happiness; of that I am determined. Some of them I shall accustom myself to, some of them I shall wean him from. For example, first, he has a habit of spitting about everywhere, on handsome matting just the same as on bare boards,—that habit he must leave off; but I will have spittoons in every room. Secondly, he smokes a great deal; to this I shall accustom myself, because I know how necessary and dear a pipe is to those who have made it for long the companion of their way through life; but we will have a contract between us, thus; I am quite willing to

see the lighted pipe, yet it shall only seldom be introduced into the drawing-room, and never into our bedroom. Bear can puff away as much as he likes in his own room, and in the hall, where the fumes pass away freely. Thirdly, he has an extraordinary habit, whilst he is silent, of making most horrible faces, often to his own thoughts, and often during the conversation of others; but here we will have a compromise,—sometimes I shall say to him, “Bear, don’t make such horrible faces!” but most frequently I shall let him grin in peace, because I know how painful it would be, how truly impossible for him to counteract this working of the features, which sometimes is so well introduced; more especially as it often furnishes a mode of speech which is very expressive, and appears more merry than disagreeable. Fourthly, he has a kind of carpenter mania, and would very willingly sit of an evening and chisel and glue, and in so doing makes a litter over tables, chairs, and floor; to this I will accustom myself with my whole heart, and merely every morning make all carefully clean again. It always gives me pleasure when a gentleman has some little favourite handicraft; and after Bear has been occupying himself all day till he is weary with his medical profession, this is a cheerful diversion of mind to him. Whilst he chisels I shall read novels aloud to him, which particularly amuse him. Fifthly, he has a habit of using certain coarse words; this I will patiently, and by little and little, get him to leave off; but that to which I am most fully determined above all things to accustom him is, to feel himself happy, and to find contentment and pleasure in his own house;—for, Maria, I was poor, was obliged to get my bread in the sweat of my own brow—for teaching music is no light labour. I was not young any longer, had no beauty, nor talent beyond that little bit of music—and he, from a family of consequence, of a respectable station in life, and universally esteemed on account of his character, knowledge, and ability, selected me from among many richer, handsomer, and better than I. He attended me during my severe fever with the utmost kindness; and when my mother would have recompensed his trouble with the remains of our hoarded-up money, he put it aside, and requested—my hand. Then he was kind to all who belonged to me; gave presents to my brothers, and through him prosperity entered into our

formerly needy house. Should I not be grateful? should I not like him? should I not endeavour with all my power, with my utmost ability, to make him happy? Ah, yes! that will I, that shall I; with his virtues and his defects, in jest and in earnest, in good and in evil, will I make him happy, and a voice within me says that I shall succeed.

Tuesday Morning, 3rd of June.

We poor mortals! What are all our good intentions when we have not power over ourselves. The day before yesterday I sate and boasted with myself how happy I would make my husband; yesterday—but in order to punish myself, I will tell you all. I must turn back to the evening before yesterday, when I was so satisfied with myself.

Bear was on a visit to a sick person in the neighbourhood, and I was writing; he came back, and I put aside my writing. I talked in grave raillery to him; we drew up various domestic regulations, and half in jest, half in earnest, the contract respecting the tobacco-smoking was made and signed. So far all was right, and so ended that day. The next day, that was yesterday, we were to dine with Ma chère mère. I had a little headache; and however I arranged my cap and my hair, I could not satisfy myself; it seemed to me that I looked old and faded. I fancied my husband thought the same, although he made no such remark. This put me out of spirits, for I feared I should not please Ma chère mère, and I knew how much Bear wished that I should do so. The weather, too, was disagreeable, and I had the greatest desire to stop at home, but when I gave the slightest hint of that, he made such terrible grimaces that I gave up all attempts of the kind. I was in fact more reluctant than ill. So we mounted the cabriolet, and in drizzling rain drove off under an umbrella.

Ma chère mère received us kindly, but she did not seem to be in good humour herself. There were several old ladies and gentlemen to dine, all strangers to me; it was a heavy affair; and though the dinner was magnificent, spite of all my attempts I could eat nothing.

In the afternoon, immediately after coffee, Bear went with the gentlemen down into the billiard-room, leaving me with Ma chère mère, the old ladies, who kept talking to themselves,

and a certain Lagman* Hök, an old and tried friend of Ma chère mère, who sate near her and took snuff. Ma chère mère was silent, played patience, and looked grave. I said now and then a word, but every moment grew stiller, for my head ached sadly ; the rain beat against the window, and to tell the truth I was out of humour with Bear, who it seemed to me might have come for a short time during that long afternoon to look after his little wife, and not have gone thus indulging his old bachelor habits of playing billiards, drinking and smoking ; and in this ill-humour the afternoon wore by.

Towards tea-time, Ma chère mère requested me to play something ; I sate down to the piano, made a prelude, and began to sing that beautiful little thing, " Youth," but the heat, my headache and my chagrin together put me quite out of voice. I sung at first tremulously, then false, and at last out of time, although I had sung that piece a hundred times before. All was as still as death in the room, and I really could have cried, only that at my age one cannot be so childish. I struck a few closing notes and left the piano, with an apology and a few words on my headache. Notwithstanding all this, Ma chère mère seemed really kind towards me ; she seated me by herself on the sofa, gave me a great cup of strong tea, and treated me as people treat a sick child. I was now really come to the crying point ; for all this, together with the good Lagman Hök's politeness, overcame me. I thought now truly this was the completion of the deplorable part I had been playing the whole day, and that Ma chère mère would think to herself, Lars Anders has made but a bad choice ; he has brought home a wife, who is at the same time old and childish, sickly and full of affectation ! I was downright miserable.

At last Bear came, and then it was time to leave ; the weather had become fine, and the tea had done me good, but the mischief had taken possession of my soul. I was out of humour with myself, with my husband, with the whole world ; and Bear sate all the time silent, and never troubled himself about my headache, for after he had just asked how I was, and I had answered " Better," he did not speak another word.

When I came home I had something in the kitchen to see after, and when I returned to the drawing-room, there had Bear settled himself into the sofa, and was blowing the tobacco-smoke in long wreaths before him while he read the newspaper. He had not exactly chosen the most suitable time for the breach of our compact. I made a remonstrance, and that truly in a lively tone, but in reality I was angry. I took, as it were, a bad pleasure in making him pay for the annoying day I had passed.

"Pardon!" exclaimed he, in a cheerful voice, and still continued to sit with the pipe in his mouth. I would not allow that, for I thought the old bachelor might have indulged himself freely enough the whole afternoon.

He prayed for permission "only this once" for pipe-peace in the parlour; but I would admit of no negotiation, and threatened that if the pipe was not immediately taken away, I would go and sit for the whole evening in the hall. In the beginning, he besought me jokingly to grant him quiet; then he became graver, and prayed earnestly, beseechingly; prayed me at last "out of regard to him." I saw that he wanted to try me; saw that truly from his heart that he wished I would yield—and I, detestable creature, would not. I remained steadfastly, although always cheerfully, by my determination, and at last took up my work in order to go out. Then Bear laid down his pipe:—oh, if he had been only angry and spiteful; if he only would not have laid down his pipe, but would have marched out as proud as a nabob, banged the door violently after him, and never come back again the whole evening, then there would have been some excuse for me, some comfort, something paid for and done with; and then I could have touched over this fatal history so finely and so superficially. But he did none of all these: he laid the pipe aside, and remained sitting silently; and with that I began immediately to endure the gnawings of conscience: neither did he make any of his grimaces, but remained looking on his newspaper, with a certain grave and quiet mien that went to my very heart. I asked him to read aloud; he did so, but there was a something in his voice that I could not bear to hear; in a sort of stifled bitterness against myself, I must yet tyrannise over him. I snatched the newspaper away from him—understand, this was in joke

—and said I would read it myself; he looked at me, and let me have my way. I read, in a tolerably cheerful voice, of a debate in the English House of Commons; but I could not hold out long. I burst into tears, flew to him, threw my arms round his neck, and prayed him to forgive my bad humour and my folly. Without answering, he held me close to his breast so tenderly, so forgivingly, whilst a tear slowly ran down his cheek. Never did I love him so much as in this moment; in this moment I felt for him real love!

I would have begun an explanation, but he would not permit it; and now it was my turn to beg of him, that if he loved me, to relight his pipe, and to smoke directly at my very side. He refused; but I besought him so long and earnestly, besought it as a token of continued forgiveness, that he at last yielded. I held my face as much as possible over the smoke—it was to me the incense of reconciliation; once I was nearly coughing, but I changed this into a sigh, and said, “Ah, my own Bear, your wife would not have been so angry if you had not forgotten her for the whole afternoon; she lost all patience while she was longing after you.”

“I had not forgotten you, Fanny,” said he, taking the pipe from his mouth, and looking kindly but half reproachfully on me; “but I was beside a peasant’s painful death-bed in the next hamlet: this prevented me from being with you.”

Ashamed to the very soul, I covered my face with my hands—I, I who had been fostering such wicked and false mistrusts against him, and now in my vanity had been revenging myself—I, unworthy one—I who wished to make him so happy, what sweet refreshment had I prepared for the weary, troubled man!

The thought of my folly distresses me even at this very moment; and the only thing that can give me any comfort, is the feeling that he and I love one another better since this occurrence than before.

Beloved, good Bear! before I will occasion you another disagreeable moment, you may smoke every day, in parlour, sleeping-room, yes, even in bed itself, if you will; only I pray God that the desire to do so may not possess you!

And now I return to your letter, and to a question which it contains: “Whether I, as a married woman, shall write

to you as willingly and as open-heartedly as I did before?" Yes, my Maria, of this be certain; I cannot do otherwise. It is now seven years since I first learned your value; and since that moment have you become to me my conscience, my better self. You were the clear mirror in which I saw myself as I was; you were true, though ever gentle; and though it is now two years since you removed from me far across the sea, still you remain towards me ever the same. Oh, remain ever so, Maria! otherwise I should fear to lose myself. Under your eyes, and with your help, my moral being developed itself; under your eyes, and by your counsel, will I also form myself into a good wife. It is pleasant to me, it makes my life richer, to live, as one may say, in your presence and with you, even though land and sea separate us; especially as my Bear does not belong to that class of men who are jealous of their wives' friends. He is not of the opinion, that one must renounce one's friends because one has a husband or a wife; he is not one to narrow the breast; he is too good, too rational for that. I believe he would subscribe to the words of the beloved teacher who instructed me in Christianity, "That there was a similarity between the human heart and heaven—the more angels the more room for them."

Ah see! there is my Bear! Read that which I have written, and subscribe

BEAR.

Friday, 6th June.

Thank God! all is right between Ma chère mère and me. How unlike can one day be to another! On Tuesday, so out of tune; yesterday, so cheerful.

Yesterday afternoon I proposed to my husband to go and visit Ma chère mère; he assented with great pleasure. On the way I related how foolishly I had behaved the last time, and how willingly I would remove any unpleasant impression which I might have made. He laughed, made faces, looked very kind, and so we came to the place.

There was a great commotion and bustle in the whole house: everybody was in motion, Ma chère mère herself as wing and wheel in the whole movement. She was busy preparing rooms for her two own step-sons (Bear is only half step-son) and their young wives, who are shortly expected,

and who will take up their quarters there, the one for a few weeks, the other for altogether.

Ma chère mère received us in the kindest manner : Bear she provided with newspapers and Virginia tobacco ; and me she bespoke as assistant for the whole afternoon. I was cheerful and willing, and succeeded perfectly in pleasing her. Furniture was removed, curtains rehung, and all went quickly and well under her commands and with my assistance. We despatched a world of work, and were right merry over it ; many were the bon-mots which I made, greatly to Ma chère mère's amusement. She slapped me, pinched my ears, laughed and replied merrily, and altogether afforded me a deal of pleasure.

There is something quite original and fresh in her disposition and manners, and mode of thought, and she has without doubt good understanding and great natural wit. Her mode of managing her household appears to me strange ; she treats them at once as slaves and children, with severity and tenderness ; and they on their part appear to be much attached to her, and obey her slightest hint.

One only time she and I were near coming to a misunderstanding : it was about the toilet-tables of the young wives, which I wished to have a little more luxuriously supplied ; but Ma chère mère grew angry, excited herself over "the cursed luxury" of our times, and over the pretensions of young wives ; declaring that the toilet-tables should stand exactly as she had placed them, with the same covers and the same looking-glasses, as they were quite good enough. To all this I remained silent, and therefore all was soon right again ; yet after all I am not sure whether the toilet-covers were not changed, as, soon after, Ma chère mère betook herself to her linen-press.

To the arrangement of the chambers succeeded several rougher pieces of house business, in which I was invited to take part, "For," said Ma chère mère, "it will do you good, little friend, to see how things are managed in a well-ordered household. It will be necessary for you to learn this and the other in domestic economy. 'Roasted sparrows do not fly down people's throats ; and one must look if there be anything in the cellar, if one expect anything on the table.'"

I followed Ma chère mère therefore into the cellar, where,

with a large piece of red chalk in her hand, she made various, and to me cabalistical, signs and strokes upon sprat and herring tubs, all which she explained to me, and then led me into every corner of these subterraneous and well-superintended vaults. After this we went to the garret, where I assisted in the examination of bread-safes; delivered anathemas over rats, and weighed several flour sacks. Last of all I must be weighed myself, and as I proved not to weigh quite a hundred-weight, Ma chère mère laughed at me in the most extraordinary manner, asserting that a woman had been burnt as a witch in the time of Charles XI. because she was under a hundred-weight. All this I endured in the most philosophical manner—but no philosophy whatever would prevent my admiration of her housekeeping and domestic arrangements. This admiration came from my heart; for in truth a house like this, so completely furnished and arranged in small as well as in great, where everything has its appointed place and stands under its own number, such a little world is worthy of observation and admiration; and no less to be admired is the housewife, who is the living chronicle of all this, and who knows her affairs as well as any general knows his war-craft.

When all this rummaging about, and this thorough house inspection was brought to an end, we sate down on a sofa to rest, and Ma chère mère addressed me in the following manner: "It is only now and then, my dear Fransiska, that I make such a house review, but it keeps everything in order, and fills the domestics with respect. Set the clock only to the right time, and it will go right of itself, and thus one need not go about tick-tacking like a pendulum. Keep this in mind, my dear Fransiska. Many ladies affect a great deal, and make themselves very important with their bunch of keys, running for ever into the kitchen and store-room;—all sluttishness, all bad management, Fransiska; much better is it for a lady to govern her house with her head than with her heels; the husband likes that best, or if he do not he is a stupid fellow, and the wife ought then in Heaven's name to box his ears with her bunch of keys! Many ladies are for ever scolding and treading on the heels of their servants; that does no good: servants must also have their liberty and

rest ; one must not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. Let your people be answerable for all they do ; it is good for them as well as for the mistress. Have a hold upon them either by the heart or by honour, and give them ungrudgingly whatever by right is theirs, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. But then, three or four times a year, but not at any regular time, come down upon them like the day of judgment ; turn every stone and see into every corner, storm like a thunder tempest, and strike down here and there at the right time ; it will purify the house for many weeks ;—if there were no thunder one could not live in peace for small fry.”

This was Ma chère mère’s housekeeping doctrine. She next turned the conversation on my husband, and said, “Yes, you can say justly, my dear Fransiska, that you are married to a husband who is a right good fellow, but still in his own way he is very wilful, and you will have to manage him pretty much in the same way as I have done. Come, we shall see how you will do ! You are little, but you can bestir yourself, and I will now tell you how you must conduct yourself towards your husband. You will always find him an honourable man, therefore I give you this one especial piece of advice—never have recourse to untruths with him, be it ever so small, or to help yourself out of ever so great a difficulty, for untruth always leads into still greater difficulty, and besides this it drives confidence out of the house.”

In reply I told her that which I had sincerely determined on these subjects ; and then contented with each other, we went into the usual sitting-room, where we found Bear sitting and yawning over his newspaper.

Mademoiselle Tuttin, who is called Adjutant Tuttin by Ma chère mère, set the tea-table in order, and I, at the request of Ma chère mère, sang (thus she had quite forgotten my first essay) ; and as I myself felt, sung very well. She laughed heartily at many merry little songs which I sang, and I saw Bear’s eyes full of delight glancing over to us from above his newspaper. After tea we made up with Tuttin Ma chère mère’s Boston party, which was one of the most amusing I was ever at. Ma chère mère and Bear were particularly lively together, and made themselves very merry at

my expense whenever I was stupid in the game, which produced much better effect than if I had played like a master; and we all laughed till we cried, like children.

After supper, as we took leave, Ma chère mère slapped me heartily on the shoulder, kissed me, and thanked me for a merry day. The weather was so fine when we came out on the steps that we determined to walk part of the way, and to send the cabriolet before us to a certain point. Our walk was very lively, and after many mischievous pranks, I had the luck to see Bear arrive at the bottom of a ditch. I cannot help laughing when I think of it; he looked so like a real bear lying there on four feet (between us two I am not quite sure whether he did not allow himself to be rolled over). The good Bear!

But I will not always be talking to you about Bear and his Bearess. You must have some knowledge of the house and family. It will be somewhat difficult on this last subject to be quite lucid, but endeavour, good Maria, to understand what I will endeavour to make clear.

General Mansfelt married to his first wife, a widow lady named Werner, with two sons, the eldest of which was my husband; the second, Adolf, who has been dead some years. By this wife the General had two sons who yet live, Jean Jacques and Peter Mansfelt. The mother of these two died whilst they were yet children. A year afterwards the General married a rich and proud Miss Barbara B——, our present Ma chère mère. Bear, who was then thirteen years old, was but little satisfied to receive a step-mother twenty years of age. She, however, conducted herself most exemplarily, and made an excellent although stern step-mother for the four boys, from whom she won both reverence and love, notwithstanding a certain rigour and economy which she practised towards them. There was, however, reason for the practice of this latter virtue; for the General, who was himself a man of lavish expenditure, had brought his affairs into great disorder, and his wife only succeeded in preserving her own property by her deed of settlement. From her own income she provided the cost of the four step-sons' education, in which she spared nothing.

The boys were made to observe the most punctilious respect in the paternal house; they were taught a certain precise

politeness, and a French style of manner. Every morning, at a stated hour, they presented themselves before their parents, kissed their hands, and said, "Bon jour, Mon cher père; bon jour, Ma chère mère!" and every evening in the same manner, at the appointed time, came the hand-kiss and the "Bon soir, Mon cher père; bon soir, Ma chère mère!" (Thus arose the appellation, *Ma chère mère*, which the sons always apply to her.) This kissing of the hand still remains whenever the sons and mother meet, although the French greeting is discontinued. For the rest, the otherwise stern step-mother allowed to her sons a deal of time and freedom for games and bodily exercises, and the enjoyment of the fresh air, for she thought to strengthen at the same time both body and mind by these means, and they had on the whole a happy youth.

General Mansfelt was a handsome man and a brave soldier, but at the same time extravagant, domineering, and wilful. He inquired but little after his children, and lavished away his property. *Ma chère mère's* marriage with him was not happy, and when he died, he left his sons nothing. Since his death her behaviour to them has, without any ostentation, been the most generous; for, without making any difference between the sons and step-sons of her husband, she bound herself to allow each one of them, as soon as they came of age, a certain annual sum, whilst she herself held the stewardship of her large but debt-burdened estate. My husband, who had chosen his own path in life, and who by his own ability and industry had won for himself an honourable position in society, declined, though respectfully, this allowance, because it was his wish to be dependent on no one, and least of all on *Ma chère mère*, whose despotic will did not always square with his independent feelings. This, together with some stiff encounters which on various occasions Bear and *Ma chère mère* have had together, has occasioned him to be on a very independent and good footing with her; whilst the other sons more or less are obliged to accommodate their wills to hers. Bear and she stand, as it were, in fear of each other, but have at the same time the highest mutual esteem; yet she declares that she will never see him beside her as physician. She sends all medicines and all doctors whatever to the fiend; will have nothing to do

with any of them ; and supports her opinion by the proverb, that " Nobody can be a good physician till he has filled a churchyard."

Since I have undertaken to write the history of Ma chère mère, I will also sketch her portrait. See, then, a tall lady, of a large but handsome growth, whose figure still retains the symmetry and roundness of youth ; very straight, somewhat stiff, and almost with the mien and bearing of a general. The countenance would be handsome, were not the features so strongly marked and the complexion so grey ; the chin, also, is somewhat too large and projecting. Round the mouth, which is furnished with large white teeth, a very friendly pleasant smile often plays ; but when the sentiment is less friendly, the under lip closes over the upper, and gives a character of such stern determination as is not pleasing in a woman. But Ma chère mère is a peculiar person. Her hair is quite grey, and streams sometimes, but not in curls, forth from the helmet, which I may now tell you is christened by Ma chère mère her "slurka," and which slurka thrones itself solitarily on the stern, high, often cloudy forehead. No ornament nor jewel appears on her attire ; but instead, the greatest cleanliness is attended to, and a something strikingly accordant and appropriate. Ma chère mère never is tight laced. (In parenthesis let it be remarked, that I should not wonder if lacing up tight may not have something to do with our often being less agreeable in company—the soul never can move freely when the body is in fetters.) Her dress generally is a brown or grey wadded silk gown ; in the morning the still handsome neck is covered by a white kerchief, which towards noon is exchanged for a standing collar. The hands are large, but well made and white, and are not always used, as people say, in the most pacific work. Ma chère mère has a rough voice, speaks loud and distinctly, makes use sometimes of extraordinary words, and has a vast many proverbs at her tongue's end. She walks with great strides, often in boots, and swings her arms about ; still, whenever it is her will to do so, she can assume a style of the highest and most perfect breeding. People accuse her of being avaricious, of mixing herself in the affairs of others, and with paying no regard to convenience ; many, indeed, are the histories which are related of her ; nevertheless, every

one throughout the whole country has the highest respect for her, and her word is worth as much as a king's, for the universal opinion respecting her is that she is prudent, a person to be relied upon, and a steadfast friend. This is a great deal, I think. She reminds me of Götz von Berlichingen ; and it sometimes appears to me as if deep and tender feeling were hidden under this stern exterior, and then I feel as if I might love her.

Hitherto, she has been the steward of her own estate, and has managed her affairs admirably ; now, however, she wishes that Jean Jacques should take part with her. This son has studied agriculture abroad, has lately married, and will now come and settle with his young wife at Carlsfors. Bear shakes his head over this partnership—*Ma chère mère* and *Jean Jacques* !

It is impossible to speak fully of *Ma chère mère* without mentioning her maid Elsa. These two have lived together forty years, and appear as if it were impossible for the one to live without the other. Elsa is towards her mistress at once a slave and a tyrant. She is so avaricious that she almost begrudges her mistress the wear of her own clothes, and grumbles over every clean pocket-handkerchief she gives her. But in fidelity, order, and cleanliness, she has not her equal ; and on this account her mistress regards her with a certain respect, and yields in many a little strife between them the mastery to her. When there is occasion, Elsa will work for her mistress night and day : *Ma chère mère* is her fate ; *Ma chère mère's* room is her sphere of action ; *Ma chère mère's* word her law ; *Ma chère mère's* person her proper self ; without her lady, Elsa is nothing. Once she received permission to visit her family, and to be away eight days ; but Elsa was back with her mistress before two days were over, because, as she said, she could not support herself so long from her. It is said that the same evening, on account of some negligence in her toilet, she received a box on the ear from her mistress ; she bore it in silence, and never after this trial left her again. Elsa is dry and stiff ; her form is all angles. People say that she knows more of *Ma chère mère* than any other mortal ; but Elsa is silent as a mummy, and deserves to be embalmed.

Tuttin, shadow of a shade, step forth ! Elsa is a Rem-

orandt-like shadow; Tuttin, one of those indeterminate ones which, without character itself, cannot take a determinate form from another. The beauty of Elsa is her strong fidelity: Tuttin says continually, "The Generalska says," "The Generalska thinks," "The Generalska commands;" yet in secret she calumniates her, and obeys her without devotion. Humble at one moment to self-abasement, she is ready at another to exalt herself above measure, if the strong arm of Ma chère mère did not put on the restraining-rein, and compel her to unfold her peculiar ability and to step forth from her darkness, with all her excellent talents of housewifery.

After one glass of her excellent ale, I am ready to exclaim, "Long life to Tuttin!" But how will Tuttin contrive to live in that world where there will be neither baking nor brewing, where no more ale will foam, and no bread will rise? how she will be able to collect together ideas there?—but a truce to Tuttin and the transmigration of souls, I will not go rambling such a long way from home.

I must now give you a description of my own beloved home, of my own little Rosenvik. Rosenvik belongs to the estate of Carlsfors, and lies a good three miles from W., where my husband is the principal and most beloved physician. He rents this little place from Ma chère mère, because he is, as well as I, so fond of the country. It is to us a source of pleasure rather than profit, although I have my own speculations about the garden, out of which I think something may be made, though as yet it is no more than a wilderness. The garden, a birch-grove, and a meadow in which three cows and a horse have their living, is the whole demesne of Rosenvik. Why it has this name of Rosenvik or Rose-Creek, I cannot imagine, as, although it lies on a creek of the Helga Lake, no rose-bushes are to be found near it; nothing but a quantity of hyssop and elder. This we may preserve, and not throw the other away; but I hope that Rosenvik may yet do honour to its name; and in the mean time, that the beautiful may not supplant the useful, I shall plant gooseberry-bushes, peas, and beans, in plenty. On the whole, I rejoice to find myself in a place where there is yet something to do, and where all is not ready and complete. My disposition and my temperament require much employment, and I know how dear that is for which one has worked

The house is small, but comfortably furnished ; we have four rooms and a kitchen on the ground-floor. Bear has had them all very prettily furnished ; especially the drawing-room, with its blue-chintz covered furniture and white muslin curtains, is a sweetly pretty room. In the second story are two handsome guest chambers. The kitchen and store-room were, I must acknowledge, but indifferently supplied, but that is a need, thank God ! soon remedied.

In respect to money, my husband has made a regulation which, at the same time that it gives me pleasure, has occasioned me some little uneasiness. He puts all his money into a strong box, to which he has had two keys made, the one he keeps and I the other, with full permission to take out as much money as I will, and when I will, without rendering any account to him. This proof of his perfect confidence in my prudence delights me, and at the same time that this confidence in me is a far stronger bond than any avarice on his part could be. I always fear to take out too much, and not to economise as I ought ; constantly avoiding to indulge my heart or even my thoughts in any little extraordinary expenditure, because I myself brought not a penny into that coffer ; all that I find there belongs to him, and is the wages of his labour. It seems to me as if I should be more free, and that it would be better if he would allow me monthly a stated sum to manage with. One day I made this proposal to him, confessing all my scruples to him with tears in my eyes, but he would not hear a word of it. "Are we not one ?" said he, "and I have seen already that you are a skilful manager !" With respect to the scruples, he assured me that I should lose them as we came to know each other better, for that then I should find that there would be no *mine* and *thine* between us two. I am greatly disposed to believe in the good man's prophecy ; but yet I intend, not only for the peace of my own conscience, but for the sake of good order, to keep an exact account of all my expenditure.

I am greatly pleased with the little maiden that Bear has provided for me, and who is to be my own maid : she is a young peasant girl, with such a happy, innocent, pretty appearance, as does one good even to see. She is quiet and industrious, has a good understanding and a good heart, so that it will be a pleasure to me to instruct her. If God give

me children, Sissa shall take care of them. I will model her into a real Bonne for them, so that I may be easy on their account when they are not in my own arms. The recollection of my own childhood tells me how important first impressions are ; therefore, purity, goodness, and good sense, shall watch over the cradle of my child ; shall even then begin to establish themselves in the soul ; and one does not soon become indifferent to the friends of one's childhood. I am speaking all this time of educating my maid, but believe me, my Maria, that I will not forget also to educate myself. How is it that the flame is so soon extinguished on the altar of love ? Because the married pair forget to supply materials for the fire. One must unfold, and cultivate, and perfect oneself in one's progress through life, and then life itself will become an unfolding of love and happiness.

My first employment will be to arrange my house so that contentment and peace may dwell in it. I will endeavour to be a wise lawgiver in my small, but not mean world ; and do you know what law I mean first of all to promulgate and enforce with the most rigorous exactness ? A law for the treatment of animals ; thus—

All domestic animals shall be kept with the utmost care, and treated in a friendly and kindly manner. They shall live happily, and shall be killed in that mode which shall make death least painful to them.

No animal shall be tortured in the kitchen ; no fish shall be cleaned while alive, nor struggle into the kettle ; no bird shall, while half dead, be hung up on a nail ; a stroke with the knife shall as soon as possible give them death, and free them from torture.

These, and several other commands shall be contained in my laws. How much unnecessary cruelty is perpetrated every day because people never think of what they do ; and how uncalled for, how unworthy is cruelty towards animals ! Is it not enough that in the present arrangement of things they are sentenced during their lives to be subject to us, and after their deaths to serve us for food, without our embittering yet more this heavy lot ? We are compelled in many cases to act hostilely towards them, but there is no reason why we need become cruel enemies. How unspeakably less would they suffer, if in all those circumstances in

which they resembled mankind, we acted humanely towards them ; and if we had compassion on them in the weakness of their age, in the suffering of their sickness, and in death.

There were laws in the old world which made mildness towards animals a sacred duty of mankind, whilst the violation of such laws were severely punished ; and we, Maria, we who acknowledge a religion of love, shall we act worse towards the animal creation than the heathen did ? Did not He who established the kingdom of love on the earth, say that not a sparrow fell to the ground without the knowledge of our Father which is in heaven ? Observe, Maria, he said not that the sparrow should not fall, but that it should not fall without being seen by the eye of the Universal Father. Yes, all the unnecessary suffering which the intemperance, the folly, the cruelty of man, occasions to animals is observed, and heard also are their lamentable cries and their complaints. On the other side the grave may not an avenging echo of the same add yet one more pang to hell, and trouble even the peace of the spirits in heaven ?

Oh, Maria ! let not us women and housewives be deserving of this punishment. Let us, when we come before the judgment-seat of the Universal Father, be pure from all unthankfulness, and abuse of any creature which he has made. Let us deserve in that better world to see around us an ennobled race of animals, to live with them in a loving relationship, even as we have already begun on earth !

Here comes Bear ! who announces to me that we must soon go and pay visits to our neighbours : we have many of them, and I am to understand that there are people among them who are longing after my acquaintance—very good, sensible people, so he assures me.

Hold yourself therefore in readiness to make new acquaintance ; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law also I shall soon have to introduce to you. I am glad to think of their arrival ; especially will it delight me to become acquainted with my husband's best-beloved brother, Peter Mansfelt, who is a very amiable man and a distinguished lawyer. In a month we also expect a guest at Rosenvik ; and with all these, and especially with Bear, I am anticipating a very cheerful and happy life.

I could find pleasure in writing a romance on all this :

romances commonly end with a marriage, but does not the proper romance of human life here have its beginning? Seen in the whole, the life of every man is a romance—a little episode out of the great romance of the "Book of Life," which is written by that great original author, "The World."

Suppose, therefore, Maria, that I should write you a little romance. Let it, my good, affectionate reader, hold a place in your heart; whether it be cheerful or sad, let me hope that you will not cast it from you.

Farewell! think kindly on your romantic and devoted
FRANSISKA.

CHAPTER II.

Rosenvik, June 9th.

IT was cool and clear weather yesterday morning. I seated myself in the cabriolet by the side of Bear, who, as usual at eight o'clock, drove to the town. He left me at Carlsfors, promising to call for me on his return, in case he did not forget it—forget it?—horrible Bear!—and so proceeded he with these words as a passport.

As I advanced up the long beautiful walk which leads to the principal front, I saw a tall, extraordinary figure standing in the court, appareled in a long grey cloak and green cap, who struck about her with something which seemed like a witch's staff, while she cried with a strong voice, "Drive up to the door, do you hear! drive up to the door with the heaven-chariot!"

I glanced involuntarily towards heaven, filled with the idea of the fiery chariot of the prophet Elisha; but the idea quickly vanished, as the moment afterwards I recognised in the figure before me the person of Ma chère mère, whom, as I came near, I found to be scolding her groom, because the oats were already exhausted, and accompanying her moral discourse by the powerful brandishing of her whip—but only in the air.

The moment she became aware of my presence, her countenance changed; she seized my hand cordially, and pressing it, said in a friendly voice, "Nay, see! good day, my dear Fransiska, you come just in the right moment. I have put on my Januarius to-day," added she, pointing to her cloak,

"because it seemed to me rather cold. My greys will be here immediately with the heaven-chariot, and then we will have a drive together;" and at these words four horses brought into the court an extraordinary vehicle, whose roof rested on four tall pillars. This was the heaven-chariot.

Ma chère mère ordered me to mount, and then climbed up afterwards and seized the reins, whilst a servant took his seat behind. Ma chère mère gave a tremendous crack with her whip, and we drove off. I was afraid at first, for we went at full speed, and the heaven-chariot went anything but in a heavenly manner. The horses for some time were refractory; but Ma chère mère stood up and applied the whip to such purpose that they became perfectly obedient. With a pleasant "By my soul! won't I teach them!" she seated herself again. She laughed to see how pale I was, drove much slower, and began to talk cheerfully, desiring me to tell her all about my housekeeping affairs at Rosenvik. As soon as I was convinced that she was a most excellent driver, I became calm and cheerful also, and gave myself up to the pleasure which I involuntarily feel when I am with her.

We saw many labourers, hedgers and ditchers, and such like people at their work. Ma chère mère spoke with many of them, praised some, scolded others; and one thing I could not fail to observe, how good the understanding seemed to be between her and her dependents, how perfectly they seemed to know her, and how they gave each other proverb for proverb.

During our drive we nearly overturned Lagman Hök, who came jogging on in a desobligent, and whose coachman was so startled by the appearance of the heaven-chariot that he turned from right to left, and exactly in the direction which we took. It would soon have been all over with the desobligent.

"The deuce! how you drive, Lagman!" exclaimed Ma chère mère in a thundering voice, whilst her powerful arm held back the horses, and by a quick turn prevented any misfortune.

Presently the heaven-chariot and the desobligent stood confidentially side by side; and again in good humour, she said laughingly and jestingly to Lagman Hök, who looked

out from his green curtains in consternation, "Dear Lagman, you have so infected your coachman with your poetical fancies that he has confounded the rule of the road."

Lagman Hök and poetical fancies! that is quite impossible thought I.

"When a chariot of heaven approaches," replied the Lagman, more poetically than I expected, "who can think about the statutes of earthly roads?"

So jested the two together for a while, and then the heaven-chariot and the disobligeant went on their respective ways.

On our return home Ma chère mère was in the liveliest humour, and we fell into a very animated conversation on men and women and marriage. Ma chère mère's doctrine for women was, indeed, no doctrine for coquettes; it might be summed up thus—"Act so that your husband and all men may esteem you; thus you will enjoy peace in your own house and honour in your life." Esteem and reputation she considers as the most valuable possessions of this world.

"The rules for the behaviour of young women towards men," said she, "may be in general somewhat too rigid. They remind me of an old song which I heard in my childhood, of the damsel Regina, and of which I still remember these words :

"Comes a fine young man to offer thee his arm,
So make thy curtsey and answer,
'No, thank you most kindly, I go well alone!'
And comes a fine young man to ask thee to dance,
So make thy curtsey and answer,
'No, thank you most kindly, I dance well alone!'"

I took up the words of the old song with her. She laughed, but remarked gravely, "That song is really not so very foolish after all, little friend. I will not exactly say as much as it, but this I will say, that to dance or to walk with any man but your husband may have its doubtful side. A young wife—lay my words to heart—cannot be too circumspect in her conduct, that she may not expose herself to remark. She must take heed of herself, my dear Fransiska, take heed of herself. I grant you that this our age is more moral than that of my youth, when King Gustave III., of blessed memory, introduced French manners and French

fashions into our country ; and I believe now that there are much fewer Atheists and Asmodeuses in the world. But as I said before, you must take heed to yourself, Fransiska, for the tempter may come to you, just as well as many another one ; not because you are handsome—for you are not handsome, and you are very short—but your April-countenance has its own little charm, and then you sing very prettily ; as one may say you have your own little attractions. And some day or other a young coxcomb may come and figure away before you ; now mind my advice, keep him at a distance, keep him at a distance by your own proper behaviour. But if this should not suffice for him—should he still make advances, and speak fulsome seductive words, then you must look at him with a countenance of the highest possible astonishment, and say—‘ Sir, you are under a great mistake. It cannot be me that you mean ! ’ Should this not answer the purpose, but he still continue to make advances, then go you directly to your husband, and say—‘ My friend, so and so has occurred, and so and so have I acted ; now you must act just as you think proper ! ’ Then, my dear Fransiska, depend upon it, the Corydon will soon discover that the clock has struck, and, no little ashamed, he will go about his own business ; whilst you will have no shame, but, on the contrary, honour from the affair, and beyond this, will find that a good conscience makes a happy countenance, and that ‘ a good conscience is the greatest luxury.’ ”

Ma chère mère’s good counsel seemed to me indescribably entertaining ; but, unfortunately, as she had invited two old and poor maiden ladies, who are partly supported by her bounty, to dinner, they entered whilst we were in the very height of our discourse. One of them in a dress trimmed with two rows of lace. The countenance of Ma chère mère darkened the moment she saw this ; and scarcely had the unlucky maiden made her salutations and seated herself, than she began a sharp tirade against the two lace trimmings.

“ One row,” said she, “ would have been a superfluity, but two are unpardonable ! ”

The poor lady endured the severe reprimand. In vain she began to excuse herself by saying that the upper row was put on to hide a join.

“ I must tell you what, my dear friend,” exclaimed Ma

chère mère, "when people are not above accepting alms, they ought not to be above showing a join! Yes, yes, this I must tell you, poverty is no disgrace; it is not every one who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth; but vanity in poverty—that is the devil in boots! Now, now do not weep on this account; reproofs are not millstones—reproofs don't bite to the bone. Take off both rows of lace, and it shall be my care that you possess a dress in which no one shall see a join."

The poor old maiden seemed consoled at once, and again Ma chère mère was in good humour, and as I heard the cabriolet drive up, I rose to take my leave.

"How, now," said Ma chère mère, cordially, "are you going, my dear Fransiska? I suppose it is no use inviting you and your husband just now to stay dinner. Nay, away with you in Heaven's name, only come again soon; because you see, my child, you suit me to a hair, and you cannot come too often. See, indeed! see, indeed! go now! I never like people standing so long to take leave. Adieu! adieu!"

I got away as soon as I could, and ran off laughing. And now I say to you adieu, adieu, also, for I will bid good-day to my returning Bear. I can now keep him a few days with me.

11th June.

Here I am again sitting with a pen in my hand, impelled by a desire for writing, yet with nothing particular to write about. Everything in the house and in the whole household arrangement is in order. Little patties are baking in the kitchen; the weather is oppressively hot; and every leaf and bird seem as if deprived of motion. The hens lie outside in the sand before the window; the cock stands solitary on one leg, and looks upon his harem with the countenance of a sleepy sultan: Bear sits in his room writing letters. The door is open between us. I hear him yawn. That infects me—oh! oh!—I must go and have a little quarrel with Bear on purpose to awaken us both.

I want at this moment a quire of writing-paper on which to bake sugar-cakes. Bear is terribly miserly of his writing-paper, and on that very account I must have some now.

Later.

All is done! A complete quarrel, and how completely

wide awake are we after it! You, Maria, must hear all, that you may thus see how it goes on among married people.

I went to my husband, and said quite meekly, "My angel-bear, you must be so very good as to give me a sheet of writing-paper to bake sugar-cakes upon."

HE (*in consternation*). A quire of my writing-paper?

SHE. Yes, my dear friend, of your very finest writing-paper.

HE. Finest writing-paper! are you mad?

SHE. Certainly not: but I believe you are a little out of your senses.

HE. You covetous sea-cat, leave off raging among my papers! You shall not have my paper!

SHE. Miserly beast! I shall and I will have the paper.

HE. "I shall!" Listen a moment. Let's see now how you will accomplish your will. And the rough Bear held both my small hands fast in his great paws.

SHE. You ugly Bear! You are worse than any of those that walk on four legs. Let me loose! let me loose! else I shall bite you. And as he would not let me loose, I bit him —yes, Maria, I bit him really on the hand; at which he only laughed scornfully, and said—

"Yes, yes, my little wife, that is always the way of those who defy without the power to act. Take the paper! now take it!"

SHE. Ah! let me loose, let me loose!

HE. Ask prettily.

SHE. Dear Bear!

HE. Acknowledge your weakness.

SHE. I do.

HE. Pray for forgiveness.

SHE. Ah! forgiveness!

HE. Promise amendment.

SHE. O yes, yes, amendment!

HE. Nay, I'll pardon you. But now, no sour faces, dear wife, but throw your arms round my neck and kiss me.

I gave him—a little box on the ear, snatched a quire of paper, and ran off with loud exultation. Bear followed into the kitchen, growling horribly; but then I turned round upon him armed with two delicious little patties, which I aimed at his mouth, and there they vanished. Bear all at

once was quite still, the paper was forgotten, and reconciliation concluded.

There is, Maria, no better way of stopping the mouths of these lords of the creation than by putting into them something good to eat.

This afternoon we shall begin our visits to our neighbours. I shall dress myself very nicely; shall wear a little straw bonnet with lilacs in it, which is right handsome; and mark only with what satisfaction Bear will present "my wife! my wife!" It is with a peculiar and a delighted tone that he says "my wife!" but at this moment "my wife" dare not stop any longer talking, she must await her husband at the dinner-table.

Evening.

Again a little strife! It is dangerous to wake the slumbering lion. The scene is over our dessert.

HE. My dear friend, which bonnet do you think of wearing this afternoon?

SHE. My little straw bonnet with lilacs.

HE. *That?* O no, wear the white crape bonnet, it is so pretty.

SHE. *That?* My only state-and-gala bonnet! What can make you think of that, my angel? to sit in the cabriolet in the dust—and it perhaps rain.

HE. Then it would not get dusty.

SHE. How witty you are! but then the rain would not improve my bonnet.

HE. My dear Fanny, you would give me great pleasure if you wore that bonnet.

SHE. Then, dearest Bear, I will wear it, even though it rained and were dusty at the same time.

And thus I now go to put on the white bonnet. What would Madame Folcker say if she saw me driving on a country road in it? Our little gardener youth serves on this extraordinary occasion as footman, in a grey jacket with green velvet collar.

Friday, 12th.

"But really," exclaimed Bear, as he saw his wife yesterday in her visiting dress, "you look so lovely in that bonnet! Positively Ma chère mère must see you in it: we will just

call and speak a word at Carlsfors before we go further. It is really very pretty!"

"Do you think so? Well just as you like, my love, if it will not make us too late at the other places."

"Ah, that must take its chance: Ma chère mère must see my little wife to-day."

See now, therefore, the little wife in the little bonnet, sitting shaking in the little cabriolet, and sending beseeching glances up towards heaven, which seemed glooming over the little bonnet. In the mean time we reach Carlsfors without a drop of rain, and found visitors there. Ma chère mère met us in the most joyful and friendly manner; kissed me, examined me from head to foot, patted me on the cheek, and said I looked like a winter moon.

"You have a little wife, Lars Anders," said she, "but one can say of her 'little and — good.' "

Bear looked delighted; for me, I must confess that it vexes me that Ma chère mère thinks me so extremely little,—one might fancy that she did not consider me a complete human being, yet I am such.

Presently after our arrival, other visitors also made their appearance, and I sat myself down to observe the company. My eyes soon riveted themselves on a very small lady, really less than I, who was still young, and whose whole being exhibited an extraordinary sprightliness. She was of dark complexion, had lively brown eyes, a somewhat large and aquiline nose, and a somewhat projecting chin. She was not handsome, yet there was a piquancy about her; and her dress, which was fashionable and elegant, accorded extremely well with her sprightly little figure.

Bear and she shook hands in the most friendly manner, and her quick eyes were immediately directed to me. Bear made a movement to introduce us to each other, but just at that moment Ma chère mère came up, turned me round and led me to the piano, insisting upon it that I should play and sing something to the company. When I had fulfilled this duty, the lively little lady came and seated herself near me, looked penetratingly at me, yet in the manner of a friendly old acquaintance, and asked how long I had been in this place, and whether I did not find the people here "horribly behindhand in comparison with those of Stockholm."

When I had gaily answered her, she said, looking continually at me with a searching glance, "you are very like your mother!—a superior woman—I often used to see her, and know you very well, Madame Werner, although I have not seen you before."

I looked at her inquiringly, and the question was on my lips, "With whom have I the honour, etc.;" but she was beforehand with me, and asked whether I had already seen many of my neighbours? I answered that at that very time we were on our way to make visits.

"Indeed!" said she; "but you will become acquainted with a variety of curious personages! Some of a water-porridge, some of a horse-radish kind! it would be a pity if you had not a preparatory knowledge of that which you will meet with. When you come for instance to the von P.'s, the new nobility at Holma, you must talk of accomplishment and the fine arts, and be heedful to mention *en passant* your genteel acquaintance—that is, if you wish to stand well with the von P.'s. Have you ever had the experience of feeling, after you have been a few hours with some people, as if you were soaked with water, or had all the new wine of life pressed out of you, as one may say?"

"O yes!" I replied, laughing.

"Just observe then how you feel when you come from the von P.'s," said she. "But don't you talk of art with Major Stålmark, of Adamsro, that is if you care to stand well there. Nature, freedom, simplicity, are the watchwords there. My good friend, the Major's lady, will talk of nothing but servants and housewifery; with the Major it is all sound reason and vigorous strength. I shall be rather anxious to know whether you find yourself really refreshed thereby, for there are tribunals of strength which are not, after all, strengthening. But take heed that the young Adamites do not play you some unparadisiacal prank or other; I fancy the old ones are to be found in the stable."

"And as a good friend," continued she, "I counsel you further not to pass by the old maiden Hellevi Husgafvel, who has her Bird's Nest not far from the city, or she would take it amiss. With her angular figure and her keen tongue, she will remind you, at one and the same time, of a woodpecker and of gingerbread—but perhaps you already know her?"

"No," replied I, "but I have heard that there is something about her both laughable and malicious."

"Laughable, malicious!" repeated my neighbour, hesitatingly; "hm—God knows if that be not saying rather too much! Malicious! she speaks out her opinion of people tolerably freely, but she does that openly, and not to the disparagement of any one. Ridiculous! why yes, that may be true—she has her infirmities, as much and perhaps even more than others. But my simile you will certainly find, at all events, very striking."

"I should like to know," said I, amused by her observations, which sounded much less malicious when spoken than they do on paper, "I should like to know what you would say of me and my husband, and to what you would compare us."

"Who," said she, "can look on the good Doctor Werner without thinking of plum-pudding, and you, my good lady, are a hot sweet sauce thereto, without which it would not be half so savoury. But what I would add further regarding your future acquaintance is, that you will never know what is really venerable till you have seen the old Dahls; and you can gain no clear idea of amiability before you have seen their granddaughter Serena, the flower of the dale, as she is called in a double sense."

"Serena!" repeated I, "that is a strange name."

"You will not think so when you have seen her," replied she; "it seems as if the Almighty himself had baptized her. But now I must leave you, and go farther; and if after this conversation you should say that I am either mad or ill-natured, I shall not mind it. I can tolerate you in any case, and I hope to see you soon again."

With this she pressed my hand most warmly, stood up and took a hasty leave of all. As he left the room I perceived that she was slightly crooked, and that she took no care to conceal it.

"Who is she? who is she?" I asked, when she had left the room.

"What, Fransiska!" said Ma chère mère, "don't you know Miss Hellevi Husgafvel? Now I have done a stupid thing not to introduce you to each other!"

I stood as if a thunderbolt had struck me. "Miss Hellevi

Husgafvel!" exclaimed I at last; "but Miss Husgafvel is old!"

"That is her own history," returned Ma chère mère; "she has her own peculiar oddities, and is at as much trouble to make out that she is old, as other people that they are young. I, for my part, do not think much about her 'Bird's Nest,' because I understand nothing about all the snails and worms and sponges that she has collected there; but she herself is a witty and estimable person, whom I like very much."

"But whatever will she think of me!" thought I, embarrassed by my want of circumspection, as I went back with Bear to the cabriolet. My bonnet had made no great figure—and what stupidity I had been guilty of! The beginning of our journey was not brilliant.

"Bah!" said I, comforting myself, "Miss Husgafvel is a reasonable person. I have not after all been so very stupid, and we can soon set all right again." La Bruyere says truly, "*Le sot ne se retire jamais du ridicule. C'est son caractère; l'on y entre quelquefois avec de l'esprit mais l'on en sort.*" And so the cabriolet rolled on merrily towards Adamsro, the abode of Major Stålmark.

On the edge of the estate we met a young girl of perhaps fourteen years old, riding without saddle on a pony; her hair was of a reddish colour, and, together with her dress, was in a state of the greatest disorder.

"Good-day, Miss Malla!" exclaimed Bear to the young Amazon; "are your father and mother at home?"

"Yes," answered she; "I am riding Putte to pasture." She rode on and we drove forward.

"Bless my heart! can that be a young lady?" exclaimed I.

"Yes," replied Bear, laconically.

We arrived at the house. There was a prodigious commotion there. Three young men in hunting dresses were lounging about with at least a half-score of dogs at their heels. No sooner had Bear and his Bearess made their appearance than the whole barking company assailed our innocent equipage, but were called off by the young men, much to the advantage of mine and the horse's heroism, and the lively but unharmonious choir betook themselves to a distance.

This place must be called Adams-unrest, thought I to my

self. As I went through the entrance-hall something coming between my feet had nearly thrown me down. I perceived that it was a piece of wood, and looking round I soon discovered two sly, young, grinning figures in one corner, who were preparing to bombard anew the peaceable guests. I threatened them with the piece of wood, and had a great inclination to make the wild young things nearer acquainted with it. But Bear, who was already within the ante-room, called me, and I followed in great haste, that I might escape a something, God knows what! which came with a great rustling close to my heels. I was angry, and yet compelled to laugh. Bear was quite enraged when he heard what I had encountered. Bear opened again the door of the ante-room, shook his fist at the Adamites, and promised them a trouncing if they did not let strangers alone. We waited till we had composed ourselves—he, till he had grumbled himself quiet, and I, till I had satisfied myself with laughing; and then entering the room, which was handsome, we encountered two persons, whose appearance indicated the possession of a certain rank and wealth;—I might call this appearance reputable. These were the Major and his lady: he an elderly though still good-looking man, of excellent gentlemanly demeanour; she, very stout, still young, but not handsome, but with a something open and honest in her exterior.

Bear presented “my wife,” and “my wife” was received as cordially as my Bear himself.

The gentlemen walked up and down the room and gossiped together; the ladies seated themselves side by side on the sofa, to make nearer acquaintance. The lady looked at me, and I at her. Her countenance seemed to me familiar, and still more so seemed her voice; the latter, which had a Finnish accent, seemed to make an especial impression upon me. I could not take my eyes from her; I saw a little scar upon her neck, and—all at once returned a little episode in my far-passed life. I must take a review of this, in order that you may understand that which follows.

In the first place then, you must accompany me to my hero deeds in the Gymnastic Hall; accompany me to that time when I was yet very young, when the blood did not flow so quietly as now in my veins,—although Bear asserts that

without mischief it might flow yet more quietly,—to a time in which I became heartily weary of seeing always the same sun and the same faces before me; when I must have adventures, let it cost what it would; when a sedition or a conflagration were a recreation; when the battle of Prague and the battle of Fleury were my favourite pieces of music; when I wept that I was not a man that I might go to the war; and when once, in a sort of necessity to enjoy an excess, I drank at Kammerer Arbells five cups of weak tea at one time, and the lady of the house, in a kind of frenzy of benevolence, would yet afflict me with a sixth.

I was then sixteen years old; and fortunately for my restless spirit, about this period my right shoulder began to grow out. Gymnastics were at that time the fashion as a cure for every description of physical ailment, and my parents determined that I should gymnasticize. Dressed, therefore, in ornamental pantaloons and a bon-jour coat of green cloth, and on my head a net-lace cap, trimmed with pink ribbons, I went one fine day into an assembly of from thirty to forty figures dressed something like myself, who rioted merrily about in a great hall full of ropes, ladders, and poles. It was a singular and wonderful scene. For the first day I remained quiet, learning merely from a teacher the bending of the back and the motion of the hands and feet; on the second day I struck up a warm friendship with some of the girls; on the third, emulated them on ropes and poles, and before the end of the second week was at the head of the second class, and began to invite them on to all kinds of undertakings.

I was reading at that time the Grecian history, and, even in the Gymnastic Hall, Grecian heroes and their deeds floated around me. I suggested to my class, therefore, that we should all assume masculine and antique names, and that from this time we should only be known in this place by such names as Agamemnon, Epaminondas, Pelopidas, etc. For myself I chose the name of Orestes, and gave that of Pylades to my best friend. There was one tall thin girl with a broad Finnish accent, who on account of the bold independence of my ideas and behaviour was always opposed to me, whom it pleased to make merry over our change of names, and who laughing, called me and my friend, Orre and Pylle, because we were both small. This annoyed me extremely

especially as it damped the Grecian spirit which I had infused through the whole troop.

My tall enemy declared that she would be called by no other than her proper name of Brita Kajsa, yet for all that, I persisted in giving her the name of Darius. Besides this there arose a new occasion of strife.

Although I was so very enthusiastic for Grecian history, I was no less a partisan for that of Sweden. Charles XII. was my idol ; and many a time have I entertained my friends with the relation of his actions, never failing to kindle up in myself the most burning enthusiasm. One day, however, Darius came over us like a shower of cold water, opposing me with the assertion that Czar Peter I. was a greater man than Charles XII. I received the challenge with blind zeal and quiet rage, and then my enemy with great coolness and a good deal of knowledge, brought forward a multitude of facts in support of her assertion. I endeavoured to tread these all under foot, and still to exalt my hero to heaven ; but had, alas ! those unfortunate words Pultawa and Bender for ever thrown in my way !

O Pultawa, Pultawa ! many tears have flowed over thy bloody field, yet none more bitter than those which I shed in secret, as I, like Charles himself, received there an overthrow ! Those tears were full of agony, which I now cannot comprehend. I really hated my enemy. I hated her as much as Czar Peter himself, and the people whose lord he had been !

One spark only was needed to make the flame break forth, and that spark came. There was a young, pretty, lame girl, whose masculine dress failed to make her less feminine and bashful than at first ; my chivalric spirit was excited in her behalf, and I declared myself her knight. One day, as I was just about to declaim a verse of Racine's, the detestable Darius suddenly started up beside me, and said jeeringly, "I am thy rival !" I threw an annihilating glance on my rival, and said scornfully, "Keep to your needle, Brita Kajsa !"

This provoked her ; she reddened, and my party broke out into a roar of laughter. The next moment, as I sate upon the upper steps of a ladder looking down on the swarming crowd below, I felt myself suddenly seized by the foot by a

strong hand. It was my tall enemy, who, stretching forth her arm, held me fast while she exclaimed in scorn, " Hollah, above there! help yourself now like an Orestes, or remain sitting grinning there like an Orre!"*

What Orestes really would have done in my situation I know not; but my anger, my cries, and my grimaces, were probably much more like those of a bird caught in a springe than of a captive hero, for an indescribable laughter rang all round, and excited me to perfect frenzy. I called with a loud voice upon Pylades, bidding him to fly to my rescue; but Pylades looked very much like a poltroon, and addressed only a few remonstrances to my enemy, which were without effect.

"I call you out! I demand satisfaction!" screamed I to Darius below, who only laughed and said, "Bravo, Orre! bravo! See! just so held Czar Peter the great Charles XII. fast at Bender!"

I was just about to do some desperate deed when one of the teachers entered, freed me, and put a sudden end to this scene. I was, however, full of fuming bitterness, and going up to Pylades, said, "You have behaved like a poor creature, Pylades! Follow me this moment; I will go and challenge this great braggadocio who has affronted me. You shall be my second."

Pylades looked like a terrified hare, yet did not dare to refuse.

I sought out Darius, who with an assumed air of indifference stood leaning against a wall, humming a tune to herself, and stepping up, said with contracted eyebrows, "What meant you just now?"

"What did I mean?" returned she, measuring me with a proud glance, "why, exactly what I said!"

"Then I have a word to say to you," answered I, grimly. "You have affronted me in an unworthy manner, and I demand that in the presence of the whole assembly you beg my pardon, and declare Charles XII. to be a greater man than Czar Peter: otherwise you must fight with me, if there be honour in you, and you be no coward!"

"Ask pardon?" returned Brita Kajsa, reddening, yet with detestable coolness, "no, that does not become me!"

* Orre in Swedish signifies a cock of the wood.

Fight? Well, yes! but where, and with what?—with needles, or—”

“With swords!” returned I, with real pride, “if you are not a coward—and here! We can come half an hour before the others; the weapons I will bring with me; Pylades is my second—choose one for yourself!” I said this with great pride.

“I shall not trouble myself about that,” replied Brita Kajsa with intolerable insolence; “I myself am enough for you two!”

“But you shall have a second!” exclaimed I, stamping with my small foot; “that is the rule!”

“Well then, Grönvall, come here,” said Brita Kajsa.

Elizabeth Grönvall was another tall girl, clumsy and stupid, with a hanging lip; and was called by me, jestingly, Nestor. She came, and listened to the relation of what was to take place, and then with an important air declared herself ready to be second to my enemy.

“To-morrow morning at nine o’clock,” said I, turning away.

“At nine o’clock!” repeated Brita Kajsa with a laugh of scorn.

I busied myself on our homeward way to instil courage into Pylades, and to silence his tongue both by good words and threats. Pylades, who really loved me, promised, after many remonstrances, with tears in her eyes, to be silent and to remain true to me to the death.

My blood was hotly boiling, yet I must confess that after I was in bed, and all was still around me, a certain astonishment and a little shudder came over me on account of the deed I was about to perform. But to recant; to leave Charles XII. in the lurch, and my own honour unavenged; to deserve the scorn and the continued persecution of my enemy—no, far better die than do that! But then I thought on the words of the Commandments; on my parents, how they would weep if I died. My enemy, too, stood before me strong and cruel as Czar Peter, and I—ah! I knew too well—was no Charles XII. As I thought on the tears of my parents I began to weep bitterly, and in weeping dropped asleep.

Next morning when I woke it was clear day, and the clock

struck half-past eight. I had nearly slept away the duel, and while I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes it was to me as if somebody had blown into my ears with a trumpet the words "at nine o'clock!" I started up. The combat stood distinct before my memory. In five minutes I was dressed. I seized two small swords, of which the evening before I had possessed myself from the room of my absent brother; when at that moment it suddenly occurred to me that I must write a few lines for my parents, in case I was killed in the combat; accordingly I wrote with pencil on a piece of paper:

" BELOVED PARENTS,

" When these lines meet your eyes——" Despair! already the clock strikes a quarter to nine—I should be too late if I delayed longer. I hastily threw the letter I had begun into my drawer; threw myself, like Cæsar, into the arms of Fortune; and betook me, with the two swords under my cloak, to the Gymnasium.

You may easily imagine that I possessed no knowledge of the art of fighting; but that did not trouble me much. To make a straightforward attack seemed to me as easy as simple, and that was the mode I meant to adopt: for the rest, I remember, that on my way to the scene of combat, I thought as little as possible. When I came into the great hall I found my enemy and her second arrived there before me. Pylades was nowhere to be seen, and in secret I could not help cursing him. Darius and I greeted each other proudly and scarcely perceptibly. I handed to him the swords that he might make his choice. He selected one, which he handled as easily and skilfully as if he had been accustomed to such toys all the days of his life. I felt myself already bored through.

Presently came Pylades, pale and full of anxiety. I cast an enraged glance on him, and closed the door.

You will probably have observed, best Maria, that I call and speak of the same person as *he* and *she*, but this confusion is not without design; it characterises not only the whole scene, but the confusion which governed my brain.

" In Heaven's name, do not kill one another!" exclaimed the poor Pylades. " It's all madness!"

" Silence!" screamed I, in anger, and turning to Darius.

said, "Do you still persevere in maintaining your error, and refusing to ask my pardon?"

"I persevere!" replied Darius, with unexampled composure, trying at the same time the temper of his weapon by bending it against the floor: "Czar Peter was a great man!"

"Death to him! long life to Charles XII.!" cried I, drawing at once, and setting myself in a position. Darius did the same.

"Wait! wait!" cried Pylades, full of anxiety; "wait, I must give the signal!"

"Give it then quickly," said I.

"Wait! wait! I have thought of something," stammered out poor little Pylades; "wait!"

"I will not wait!" cried I. "Russian friend," said I, addressing Darius, "I count three, and then we strike! One! two! three!"

Our swords struck; and the same moment I was disarmed, and lay overthrown on the ground. Darius stood over me, and I believed my last moment was come. But how astonished was I as my enemy threw away her sword, and taking me by the hand lifted me up, saying at the same time cheerfully, "Now that you have had satisfaction, let us be good friends. You are a brave little being!"

Pylades lay on her knees, nearly fallen into a swoon; Nestor sat upon a ladder, and cried with all her might. I knew not what to think, and stared at my late enemy, on whose neck a wound was bleeding freely. "You bleed!" I exclaimed; "I have killed you!"

"Ah, bah! it's only a little scratch that will soon be well," said she: "for the rest, I must tell you that I like the Russians just as little as you do; I said so, only—" she turned pale, staggered, and required a seat.

"What have I done! unfortunate that I am!" cried I in agony, almost out of my senses, and threw myself on the ground before her. "Forgive, oh forgive me!"

At that moment a terrible alarm sounded at the door; Pylades slipped aside and opened it, when in rushed the fencing-master and three teachers. The next moment I lost all consciousness.

It was not till some weeks afterwards that I learned we

had been betrayed by Pylades, who had written to one of the teachers praying her to prevent my foolish intentions. The letter, however, came too late for that purpose, and thus the affair was over as they entered.

Brita Kajsa—for from this time I christened nobody with new names—recovered from her wound in a short time, whilst I lay dangerously ill above a quarter of a year. This sickness, however, was beneficial to me, for it calmed my impetuous temperament.

On my recovery I learned that Brita Kajsa had removed with her parents to their own dwelling in Finland; that she had visited me frequently in my illness, and had expressed her regret that they must leave Sweden before I had recovered, so that we could be fully reconciled with each other. I also was grieved not to have said one kindly word to her at parting. But, my violent sickness, during which I was almost constantly delirious, had weakened old impressions; and then followed a variety of sorrowful causes, such as death, adversity, the having to earn my own bread; and much more which afflicted me, but which operated beneficially on my disposition. I forgot the past—therefore enough of it,—and now to the present.

Twelve years were passed since then; I had quite forgotten the countenance of my former enemy. I had forgotten my early bravery; I was become a grown woman, and knew how to appreciate Czar Peter, and to wish well to every one, even to the Russians. I had become the good wife of Lars Anders Werner, and now went out with him in the cabriolet to make visits as well-behaved and quiet as any Mistress Prudentia whatever!

Well now, Maria! the Major's lady on whose sofa I now sate, the stout gentlewoman with the open pleasant countenance that struck me at once as so familiar, yet unfamiliar, who was she but my former thin enemy of the Gymnastic Hall, Darius, Czar Peter, in one word, Brita Kajsa! Her voice and the scar on her neck made me at once perfectly recognise her. I cannot tell you how much I was excited. I felt embarrassed, affected, but still more filled with merriment, which prompted me to break into exclamations and laughter. The spirit of joke and mischief got the mastery of me, and taking up a knitting-needle which lay before me on

the table, I put myself in a martial attitude before her, and exclaimed, "Long live Charles XII.! We strike! One! two! three!"

The lady looked at me a moment, as if she thought I must be gone mad, and then exclaimed herself the next moment, "Czar Peter was a great man!" seized another needle, and opposed herself to me. On this, we dropped the needles at once, and, laughing, embraced each other.

Imagine to yourself—but I defy you to imagine the amazement which this scene occasioned to Bear and the Major; but of all the questionings, the exclamations, the explanations, the astonishment, and the laughter that succeeded, you may easily imagine.

Brita Kajsa and I contemplated each other anew. "Bless me!" exclaimed she, "how old you are become since then!"

"And you not more amiable," *thought* I; but I said, "You, on the contrary, are in appearance much younger!" which was true; the fair fat lady was much handsomer than the dark thin girl.

After we were satisfied with narrating, wondering, and laughing, we came to speak of the pleasures and follies of childhood in general. The gentlemen grew very lively over the histories of their wickedness and their adventures, and Brita Kajsa declared that she had never been so happy as in the days of her childhood. All appeared unanimous in considering this time as the golden age.

"Yes, yes!" said my husband at last with a sigh, "it is a good time, that never returns to us."

"Dearest," said I, somewhat troubled by this childhood enthusiasm, "don't imagine that it was so immeasurably good. Is not childhood to grown persons like the landscape seen in perspective? It looks so beautiful only because it is seen from afar. I am convinced that as a child you had many weary hours, with lessons, reproofs, penances, confinement, and many other such things, which cannot affect you now."

Bear laughed.

"I, for my part," continued I, "will never praise the days of childhood. To me this time was full of ahs that I was not grown up. Ah, how charming it would be to be grown up, and not be scolded for tearing my dress! Ah, only to be

grown up and drink coffee every day! Ah, how fortunate to be grown up and go to the ball, like mamma, in a gauze dress and with flowers! Ah, that I were but grown up, and might read romances! Ah, ah, if I were but a woman! I am convinced that every child, each in its own way, has similar ahs! But grant for a moment that sometimes children may really be happy, what after all is this happiness? A happiness fleeting and but half understood, which we therefore can only half enjoy. And when we at length reach that goal of our childhood's desires—when we are grown up, drink coffee, read romances, and go to balls—alas! then that—ah! has taken root in the heart itself, and we have then so much unrest that we may be able to enjoy the true rest. And here have we that much bepraised happiness of childhood and youth."

"Really there is great truth in what Madame Werner has said," remarked the Major, gravely; "and every period of life, indeed, has its difficulties. That was curiously well said, that about the perspective—yes, yes, it is true."

"And so you did not enjoy your early youth, Fransiska," said Bear, looking at me half surprised and half grieved.

"No, in truth, I did not," returned I: "I was much too unquiet and unreasonable for it to be happy, and without quiet and without reason there can be no true happiness."

"Very good, very good," said the Major.

Tea was brought in; and the young gentlemen came in at the same time, three brisk, lively young men, only too countrified, the step-sons of Brita Kajsa. They talked of hunting and horses, of hares and of dogs, from which subjects the conversation naturally turned to the new neighbour at Ramm. They said that he was an American; "and," added one of the young men, "very rich, and that his history was as strange as that of any hero of romance."

"Indeed!" said the step-mamma, shrugging her shoulders, "I am convinced that he is very much like other people; but, dear Robert, you always exaggerate so."

Robert blushed as if he had said something extremely improper. At the same moment in rushed the young Adamite swarm, just like so many gadflies; threw themselves down to the tea-table, and endeavoured to possess themselves of all that was eatable. The mamma endeavoured to obtain quiet by a lecture on good behaviour; but the little monsters

troubled themselves not on this account, nor would be still till their demands were satisfied. I wished with all my heart that Bear could have seen this, but he was occupied with the gentlemen in another room.

"One must not subject children too much," said the mamma; "one must leave them their freedom; for by this means they grow up natural, and not, like so many, artificial and affected. Have you seen the Misses von P.?" asked she; "heavens! how ridiculous it is to see them sitting in their white gloves, with their screwed-up mouths, thinking themselves so grand and genteel."

At this moment the door was pushed open, and a figure stepped in which no one could accuse of affectation. Her hair, her dress, her carriage, all seemed to be made of windy weather.

"Come here, Mally," said the Major's lady, and introduced to me this her step-daughter, who making a pettish, countified curtsey, turned herself round to the tea-table as her brothers and sisters had done, where all three immediately began to quarrel, and some such amiable words as the following were audible—"Fye! arn't you ashamed of yourself?" "Can't you let my biscuit alone, you pig, you ugly, ill-mannered thing! I'll tell mamma of you!" And immediately followed a loud cry of "Mamma! mamma! mamma!"

But the mamma did not trouble herself about them. The gentlemen came in; and while the Adamites ate and quarrelled, and we therefore saw a chance to get out of the house with life and uninjured limbs, we took our leave; Brita Kajsa and I shaking each other most kindly by the hand, and exchanging mutual good and neighbourly wishes. I determined, however, in my own mind, not soon again to put myself in bodily danger from timber missives, nor of being complimented on my elderly appearance. The Major accompanied me to the carriage—cabriolet I should say—and appeared to be greatly pleased with me. For myself, I too must confess that the visit on the whole had afforded me pleasure; still I left the house with two little thorns in my heart. Would you know what they were? The first of these was, that Bear had declared himself to have been so desperately happy in childhood, and had sighed over the remembrance, as if the present were as heavy as lead.

Secondly, I feared I had talked too much, and with too much warmth, in a place where I then was only for the first time. I feared my husband might not be pleased with me, and might feel disposed to set "very bad, very bad," against the "very good, very good," of the Major. I would have given my life just to have known what he thought about it; but the good man sate beside me stock still, and noticed nothing but his reins.

I must know, thought I to myself, and began puzzling my brain how I should introduce the subject, when, just as I was about to open my lips, he said, "I am sorry, indeed, Fanny, that you had not a happy childhood!"

"But it makes me a great deal more sorry," said I, just ready to cry, "that you were so terribly happy in your youth that you can never be so happy again, and that all after-pleasure must be heavy in comparison. You had more pleasure in your ball then, than you can have now in your wife."

"You little fool!" said he, looking at me with such an expression of astonishment as at once appeased me, "you really cannot think so! You cannot think me so mad! Yes, truly that time was good, but this is far better!"

"Thank God!" said I softly, and deeply grateful.

"And then," continued he, "I think the childhood of but few is as happy as mine was! When I think how the whole world seemed to smile on me then; what I felt when I lay, looking upwards towards heaven in the grass, and heard the rustling round me in the wood; when I think how, later in life, I went wandering through those woods about Ramm; how everything around me seemed life and pleasure—then, Fanny, I may well wish that you had experienced as happy a childhood and youth as I have done."

"But life, Bear," replied I, "has sometimes an after-summer, like the year, and I feel that mine has begun."

Bear took my hand in his, and pressed it; not a word was said, but we were happy, and the cabriolet rolled rapidly along the level road homewards.

"What a desolate region this is!" exclaimed I, after a while, and surprised by scenery I was not familiar with; "it is unlike our valley. Where are we, for here are only hill and wood.

"We are in the neighbourhood of Ramm," replied he. "I have purposely taken this road, that you may see the place where my youth was passed. Independently of this too, both the house and park are worth seeing. I am glad that somebody is coming to live here now; it is always painful to see a place desolate where people might live, and where life might be enjoyed."

"But who could properly enjoy life here, Bear?" I asked. "All is here so black and dreary! That long alley is dark as a church-vault! and there at the end, is that the house? Ha! it looks like an old castle haunted by ghosts!"

"And yet," he replied, "here has been great happiness—great joy—but," added he, "it is true, great sorrow also!"

"What! has some misfortune happened here?" asked I.

"Yes," he replied, "a misfortune—but now is the place overgrown!"

"Like a scar over a closed wound," said I.

"True!" replied he; "true, thank God! It is a long time since I was here; and now I hardly know it again. And that house, how dark it has become!"

"I assure you," said I, "it is haunted—I saw a little grey man peeping through a window."

"Perhaps the new resident is already come," remarked he.

"If he be not more cheerful than this place, then"—the cabriolet stopped and we alighted. I looked up with a certain feeling of reverence and anxiety to the stately and gloomy house, which, with its tall three-storied façade and black tower, and its adjoining dark wings, bore a resemblance to a swooping owl. Tall oaks grew around it, and many of the lesser children of the wood. Service-trees, poplars, and palm-willows thronged round the walls and looked in at the windows, like people crowding to gaze upon a royal table. To the left, silvery water gleamed out between the trees—the Helga sea, that water beside which Rosenvik lies so pleasantly.

In the middle of the court, which was now completely overgrown with weeds, an invalided Neptune, standing amid moss-covered water, told that in earlier days there had once been a stately fountain there. Everything looked desolate and unhappy; yet there was, as we soon perceived, a movement in the house, though not of ghosts, as we soon discovered.

The great door stood open, and presently a workman coming out, we learned from him that the place was about being immediately prepared for the new resident who was shortly expected here.

We entered ; and I could not help being surprised by the size of the rooms and the view from the other side of the building, and was almost ready, with a certain lady, to exclaim, " Ah, how gloriously beautiful is it here ! here trees, and there wooers !" I rejoiced myself in the free wide landscape, extending over woody heights and surrounding meadows. To the left lies the Helga sea ; nay, indeed, it flows up to the very walls, which are built upon a low rocky point, garlanded as it were with alder-bushes, while the water breaking in little waves on the beach makes delicious music.

In one of the handsomest rooms I was greatly surprised to find a magnificent organ, which has lately been set up there.

" Mr. Romilly is very fond of music," said the overseer of the work, who, with great politeness, had gone through the rooms with us.

" Of what country is he ?" asked Bear.

" He is a Portuguese," was the reply. " He was attached to Don Miguel's party ; inherited afterwards the property of an uncle in the West Indies, and will now come and enjoy his great wealth in our country, because it is the quietest and most secure in the world."

" By good luck," thought I, " we may next have Don Miguel himself for our neighbour in Ramm !"

I could not resist trying the organ, which was of a magnificent, although somewhat too strong a tone for my taste ; yet at the same time it enchanted me, and I know not how long I should have sate before it, had not Bear reminded me that it was already evening.

" Now the only agreeable things in this house," said I, " are the organ and the prospect towards Rosenvik. I would not live here for all the wealth in this world ; still on an autumn evening I would gladly come here by moonlight, if you would only come with me, Bear, and wander about to see whether it be not here, as in old castles of which I have read. Whether there be not moving walls, ghost-like shadows, blood-stains which can never be effaced, balls of thread which

roll after one's heels, and at last transform themselves into bloody daggers—— :” here I suddenly paused, for my husband sighed, and glancing at him I saw that his usually so friendly, good-natured countenance had become so dark that I shuddered, and turned round involuntarily to see whether a ball of thread were not following us ; but thank God, I saw nothing ; and then with secret haste followed him out of the house, and the moment we descended the steps a flight of jackdaws from the tower flew over our heads into the wood.

“ And here it was so joyful, so beautiful !” sighed Bear ; “ it was a home for youth, for sport, and life !” he sighed again.

“ But how is it so different now ?” asked I, “ and why did Ma chère mère leave a dwelling which is far finer than Carlsfors, and which had once, you say, far more lively guests than jackdaws ?”

“ Because, because,” hesitated he, “ she experienced a great sorrow here. Do not speak to her of Ramm, Fanny ; do not tell her that you have been here : another time I will tell you why. Look at the park ! This large, beautiful wood, which is nearly seven miles in circumference, is, or rather was, a park. Now the paths are grown up. But we will sometimes come and look about here.”

“ It is very gloomy here,” said I ; “ yet while I was even speaking these very words, a ray burst forth from the descending sun, and threw a golden glory upon the dark grey house and on the summit of the wood. I do not know how it was, but at that moment the name Serena came into my mind as if it had been the literal signification of this sunbeam. The sunbeam was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

“ Thus—yes, exactly thus !” said Bear, with a melancholy smile, as he observed, with a tear in his eye, the illuminated and again darkened house.

We mounted the cabriolet in silence, and silently drove towards home. As we came into more cheerful scenes I seemed to breathe more freely ; and as it seemed to me at length that our thoughts had dwelt quite long enough on the old crow's nest, I raised my voice and asked, “ Bear, where does Serena live ?”

A smile came over his face like sunshine in the wood, and he said, “ Yes, she is lovely !”

"That I believe," said I, "but where can one see her?"

"She lives in the city, and is the handsomest and best girl in the whole place," said he.

"But, Bear," remonstrated I, "you have never spoken to me about her."

"I prefer leaving people and things," said he, "to speak for themselves. You shall soon see her, for one of these days we will go and pay a visit to the old Dahls."

I was intending to ask still further questions when a great rain-drop hit me upon the nose, and then a second, and then a third, till it was a perfect shower. We sought for the umbrella, but it had been forgotten, and now handkerchiefs and shawls were in requisition to cover my bonnet. But ah! in vain; my gauze state-and-gala bonnet was entirely ruined before we reached home! shape, freshness, colour, and flowers, all were wet through and spoiled for ever. But the only discontented face which this misfortune occasioned was Bear's.

And so ended the first visiting-day.

THE SECOND VISITING-DAY.

What does the bird of passage do? He goes restlessly wandering about the world, seeking for a place where he may build for himself a home to dwell in. For he finds no rest;—and who indeed does?—till he has found a home, a little world for himself, in which after his own desires he may live in rest and freedom. And when he has found a spot or a tree in which he will abide, then carries he together leaves and wool and straw, and builds for himself a home. There he can rest, sit up aloft in his nest, look out on the world below, and sing. And so till the next time of his wandering.

And now, after this little preface, I shall conduct you to the Bird's Nest of Miss Hellevi Husgafvel. As I ascended the steps to the door, I must confess that my heart was not as light as a feather, for the words "malicious and ridiculous" lay heavy on my conscience; but from the topmost step down flew Miss Husgafvel to meet me, embraced me with smiles, and I on my part heartily returned her embrace, thinking with myself, "Miss Husgafvel is a sensible person;" in which opinion I was only the more decided the more I looked about her Bird's Nest.

The neat little house was a perfect little museum. Excellent copper-plate engravings, and paintings by good masters, ornamented the walls; beautiful busts in bronze and plaster of Paris were tastefully arranged about. One was delighted to find one room a library; and in another was a collection of shells, minerals, and many curious natural productions, placed under glass; all in good preservation and well-arranged. All was fresh and in order; wherever, in short, we cast our eyes, indications of mind and sentiment were seen; whilst the lively little Husgafvel herself, leading us here and there and explaining all to us, was not the least interesting part of the collection.

I was quite happy and refreshed by what I had seen. "But really it is quite charming here," exclaimed I; "can any one experience ennui here?"

"Your words afford me a great pleasure, dear Madame Werner," replied Miss Husgafvel, in a lively voice, "for it is my highest wish to drive away this wearisome enemy, ennui, with all its attendant yawning and vapours. All that I have collected together in ten years is merely to prevent my friends, and more especially myself, experiencing ennui; and my daily occupation and my pleasure are continually to bring into my nest some new straw or other, or to re-arrange the old. You see this engraving," said she, pointing to a St. John after Dominechino, "and this head of Venus in plaster of Paris. I received them yesterday; and to-day they make me quite happy. I am not rich enough to purchase original masterpieces, but I can possess myself of copies; and thus at small cost collect in my nest the ideas of great artists."

"But *these* masterpieces are all originals," said I, as we entered the little cabinet of natural history.

"Yes," answered Miss Husgafvel, "and on this account they are the most valuable that I possess. The great artist, God, acts here as with all, *en grand seigneur*. He has scattered his inimitable works of art over land and shore, in wildernesses, and in the depths of the sea itself; the earth is full of them, and mankind has nothing to do but to go out and collect."

The remarks were to me quite unexpected. "O Miss Husgafvel," said I, "you are right; how much richer might we not make our lives, if we would gather of the good that is

around us ; if we all, each day, brought home a straw, as you call it ! But too often we go about like the blind, seeing nothing."

" Ah, that is the misfortune !" said she ; " could not the doctors operate upon this kind of cataract ?"

" That of itself would do no good," said my husband ; " it requires another sort of operation."

" O Lord ! what do you mean, Dr. Werner ?" asked she.

" That one finds in many people a sleepiness, a heaviness of disposition, which——"

" I hate all heaviness," interrupted Miss Husgafvel, with a spring like that of a frightened bird ; " it sends lead into my heart only to hear the word spoken. I have rigorously striven to fly from it, and in my terror have taken refuge in my Bird's Nest ; but even here, alas ! I must acknowledge that there is a law in the world which may be called the law of gravity, and which draws our bodies down to the earth. Yet I strive to keep my soul free, and to collect subjects of thought around, as a bird may fly about the world and drink dew from the flowers of Eden. Were I a Corinne or a De Staël, I should, perhaps, possess enough in myself. I should then sit down in my little home, a lyre in my hand, and, like the nightingale, enchant my friends with the tones of my voice alone. But as I am only Hellevi Husgafvel, moderately gifted both in body and soul, and yet do all that in me lies to make it agreeable to those around me, I have called these children of art and nature to my assistance. And if my visitors experience ennui, I can only assert that it must be their own fault."

The lively lady said all this as she led us down into her garden ; into a flowering vine and odoriferous peach-house ; and then showed us many beautiful and rare plants, which she herself cultivated, and called her children. The Bird's Nest consists merely of a house and garden ; but the garden is large, well fenced, and richly furnished with trees and flowers.

We partook of a collation in a pretty little pavilion in the garden ; and, while we were thus occupied, other visitors from the city made their appearance, among whom was Lagman Hök, who was received by Miss Husgafvel with particular cordiality. The conversation was general, but soon

turned itself upon the new neighbour at Ramm, about whom the most various reports and conjectures were given. By turns he belonged to all nations, and his journey here was ascribed to the most various causes; the most generally accepted of which was that he was a spy; but what he was come to spy nobody could tell.

"Now, I'll bet anything," said Miss Husgafvel, after many merry guesses had been made about him, "that our ill-renowned neighbour after all will turn out quite a simple, and nothing but a worthy man, who, tired of his own country, is come here into Sweden to divert himself with shooting hares and roebucks. I have lived ten years at Bird's Nest, and have never seen either a spy, a renegade, or the hero of a romance. I fancy these races are fast decreasing in the world. On the contrary, I have seen many people who are weary of themselves, and who want to get rid of the burden of life. God grant that this race may become extinct also! I have not, however, any objection that this new neighbour should be a man of the first class, nay, I wish it; it would make the whole country lively, and might, perhaps, somehow occasion an interesting romance."

The conversation was continued long on this subject, and was kept up with great spirit.

Miss Husgafvel belongs to that rare class of people, who not only can keep up a lively conversation themselves, but seem to decoy good things out of others. I was quite surprised to hear how witty Bear was; he and Miss Husgafvel jested one against the other, and bantered one another like good old friends. She followed us to the garden-door as we came away, and I fancy read in my eyes that I wished to make some apology for the remark I had so inadvertently made when we first met; for she took my hand, and said in the most cordial manner, "Come often to Bird's Nest, my good Madame Werner, will you not? I care nothing after all, if people do say that the old Miss Hellevi is malicious and ridiculous. I myself have heard the report, but it will not occasion her one more grey hair than she has already. But to you, Madame Werner, she would willingly appear different! and she is bold enough therefore to beg you to come again; and Dr. Werner, I hope, will accompany his wife. I feel myself better when I see him. But remember this, I do not

compel you—I hate compulsion in social life; and dear Madame Werner, if you should ever say to the Doctor, ‘Ah, good husband, we really must pay a visit to that old Miss Hellevi Husgafvel—it is rather a dull business, but still she pressed us so!’ then I pray you, in Heaven’s name, not to come; and even, indeed, if you were never to come again, Miss Hellevi would say all the same—the Werners are good-hearted people, and it would give me great pleasure to see them often.”

“But,” said I, “the Werners are not so liberal; they reckon confidently on seeing you soon at Rosenvik, and will talk ill of you if you do not soon come.”

“Is it possible? then I will be among the first to come!” said the lively little lady, and kissing her hand to us, flew away. Flew, I say, because she resembles a bird in so remarkable a manner; all her motions are quick, but too abrupt to be graceful.

As the cabriolet bore us slowly away in the peaceful, beautiful summer evening, I endeavoured to discover clearly what was the impression which the Bird’s Nest and its possessor had made upon me. I had experienced pleasure: Miss Husgafvel pleased me in the first instance, because she had so kindly forgiven my stupidity; secondly, on account of her dwelling and her philosophy of life: but still I was not completely satisfied. One *but* after another raised itself in my mind against her Bird’s Nest; then another *but* raised itself against this objection; and so at last, to disentangle myself from this but-warfare, I determined to draw Bear into it.

“Bird’s Nest,” I began, “is very neat, pretty, and interesting; but——”

“But what?” questioned he.

“But I miss a something,” said I, “in this little museum when I think of it as a home. It seems to me as if there were something dry, something egotistical, in the whole establishment.”

“How so?” asked Bear attentively.

“How shall I say?” deliberated I. “It seems to me as if the love of the shells had dried up the heart. Whom does Miss Husgafvel make happy by her establishment and her life? Who is benefited by them?”

" My dear Fanny," replied my husband, " we must take care not to judge too severely, and not to take that word *benefit* too one-sidedly. It is true that Miss Husgafvel leads a pleasant life for herself, but she imparts pleasure also to her friends. There would exist less accomplishment and less pleasure in this neighbourhood if Miss Husgafvel and her Bird's Nest were not here. Her Wednesday *soirées* are as lively as they are interesting ; we will sometimes go to them."

" Now yes, Bear," said I, " it is very well that she amuses the people ; it is very well that somebody will give themselves the trouble ; but still I think that her house would be more attractive if it could offer—how shall I express it ?—a more lively human interest."

" It is not without such a one," returned he, " even though it be concealed."

" How ?" inquired I.

" Miss Husgafvel has a younger sister, who made an unhappy marriage, and in consequence became extremely unfortunate. When she was a widow, and had lost all her property, her sister Hellevi was not only her excellent friend, but took her to live with her, and became the support of her and her daughter. This poor lady, an estimable mother, has become averse to society through her misfortunes. If you had gone to the upper story of the house, you would have seen still-life there not less interesting than Miss Hellevi and her museum ; human beings cannot love one another better than these two sisters do."

" If there be such eggs in the Bird's Nest," said I, " I am perfectly satisfied with it ; for you see, my own Bear, that without a loving human heart I can consider no dwelling happy, even were it full of works of art and jewels. But now, long life to Miss Hellevi Husgafvel and the Bird's Nest!"

THE THIRD VISITING-DAY.

A meagre day in a rich house. The house would be magnificent, but is only decked out. The master would be Grand Seigneur, but boasts of his chandeliers and French carpets. The lady would be of the highest taste, and would conduct the most interesting conversation, of which, however, she makes only an extraordinary mishmash. The daughters

would be highly accomplished, full of talent and style, and have a sort of jargon, from which only proceeds a great emptiness. The son would be a person of great importance, and is only a little blonde gentleman with badly-curled hair. The whole family is a collection of unfortunate pretensions.

A great inheritance, a patent of nobility—(N.B. Mr. von P. says that he has merely reassumed his German nobility in Sweden)—and a journey to Paris, have, according to their opinion, exalted the family of the von P.'s very high in the world. For the last two years they have been settled at Briteberg ; have spent the summer there, and built a splendid house, and would now pass for eagles among small birds ; but they must see, with great astonishment, *Ma chère mère* look down upon them.

Notwithstanding all this, Mrs. von P. is a very polite lady ; but a certain flourish of condescending friendliness towards me took away all charm from her politeness. Several young gentlemen, who were calling at the same time, chatted and laughed a great deal with the young ladies, Emelie and Adele, who, in the most elegant toilet, sate with French gloves on their hands, moving their heads as if they were fixed on steel wire.

Mrs. von P. questioned me immediately after Generalska Mansfelt, examining me as to my relationship with her, by which it came out that I was not at all related to her. I had never thought of this before, and it made me sorry to discover it. Then we began to speak of Stockholm, and of all well-known people there, when behold ! all Mrs. von P.'s acquaintance and intimate friends were Counts and Countesses. Above all, she spoke of Count L.'s family. Count L. and his family had lately been at Briteberg, and now the von P.'s were invited to pass part of the summer with the Count L. at H. The von P.'s had made an excursion with the L.'s the former summer to Uddewalla, and had resided at Gustavsberg together ; the Countess L. was an extraordinarily charming person, whom Mrs. von P. liked as a sister ; and the Miss L.'s were pretty and accomplished girls, *tout-à-fait, comme il faut*. Madame Werner, you know the L.'s ?”

“ No !” Madame Werner must confess her ignorance.

“ At Count L.'s,” said Mrs. von P., “ we met the best

society in Stockholm. I there met the Baron N.'s family perhaps you are acquainted with them?"

"No."

"Not? They are of the highest standing," said the lady. "But I cannot help thinking that I must have met you, Madame Werner, in evening parties at Count B.'s."

"It is not possible," I replied, "for I never was there."

"But—" persisted she, "it seems to me that positively— Pardon, but might I inquire Madame Werner's family name?"

"Burén."

"Bure—Burén," said she; "an old noble family, I believe."

"I don't know, I believe—" said I, hesitating and blushing, for I knew that my family was not noble; but a little miserable weakness had come over me.

"Yes, yes," continued Mrs. von P. in a consolatory manner, "it is certainly a noble name, but in our restless times everything gets so easily confounded. Our family, for instance, which is descended from an old German stock, and has given its name to princes and counts of the Empire,—our family, I can tell you, even had forgotten its rank and lived anonymously in Sweden until Count L. said to my husband, 'It will not do any longer, my good friend; you, with your great property and your deserts, must have a seat and voice in the House of Nobles.' Much more of the same kind, too, the Count said, which induced us to assert our old claims to nobility. The affair is to be sure in itself but a mere trifle, especially in our times, for whoever anticipates the age a little, sees easily that education now is the true aristocracy, and art, as good as a patent of nobility. We live in an enlightened age, my best Madame Werner," continued she, "and my friend the Countess L. always said, 'Education gives a positive rank.' Now it is true, one may be always glad, and thank God not to have been called Bäckström or Wallqvist, Löfgren, Sjögren, or such like; a good name, like real property, is always a piece of good fortune. When people are placed by fate in a high station, they can so much more easily choose their acquaintance, and get into certain circles. Amalie, L.'s sister, the Countess

W., once said,—do you know the Countess W., Madame Werner?"

"No,—yes,—a little," replied I.

"Is she not a most charming person?—Amalie," said herself, "Ma sœur vaut mieux que moi! It delights me, Madame Werner, that you know so distinguished a lady. Ah, tell me yet some more of your acquaintance in Stockholm, perhaps it may happen that they are mine also."

I acknowledge to you my weakness, Maria. I sought about in my brain after Counts and Countesses. I believe Mrs. von P. had infected me with her passion for the high-born. I mentioned, therefore, at last, the Baroness R.

Mrs. von P. looked contemptuous. "Don't know her," said she; "probably *retirée du monde*. At Count L.'s, and at our own house, the very best society only assembled; corps diplomatique was at home with us and Count L.'s."

At this moment I suddenly became aware that Bear was glancing at me with the most roguish grimaces—this, and the unfortunate attempt I had made with the Baroness R., drove the rage for distinction quite out of me; and in order to make myself at once quite independent and clear, I named the family of his Excellency O—— as my acquaintance in Stockholm.

Mrs. von P. started a little. "Ah——indeed!" said she, slowly; "I too have been there—a few times."

"O, I was there twice, three times a week," said I, smiling.

"Indeed! O—— a most distinguished house," remarked she; "perhaps the Countess O—— is an intimate friend of Madame Werner?"

"No, I saw her but seldom," I replied. "I gave music-lessons to her daughters."

"Ah, yes indeed!—on account of the acquaintance I suppose," said she.

"No," I replied boldly, "for money. I was poor, and I maintained myself thus."

Mrs. von P. grew red, and looked quite embarrassed; but Bear smiled, and that gave me courage. "My brother-in-law, Bergvall," said I, "and my friend, Madame Wallqvist, obtained for me through Demoiselle R., the governess in his

Excellency's house, the situation of music-teacher to the daughters of this excellent family."

"Ah, indeed!—ah, indeed!—ah, indeed!" said Mrs. von P., visibly quite out of conceit; and then, wishing to give the conversation another turn, she addressed her daughters, "My dear girls, cannot you play and sing us something?—some of those pieces which you have sung with the Misses L."

The young ladies complied, after some of the gentlemen had seconded the request of their mother, and sang both French and Italian pieces, which they spoiled through their affected and tasteless manner. In the mean time, Mrs. von P. talked of Colorit, of Weber, Rossini, and Meyerbeer. "Weber," said she, "is whimsical, Rossini poor in melody, but Meyerbeer excels them all; he is truly *le prince de la musique*. You must not imagine, however, Madame Werner," said she, "that I do not value the practice of all the arts. In my opinion, it is art alone which confers on us higher life, and therefore I have given to my daughters the same education which I received myself; they are acquainted with four languages; have great talent; and it is only lately that we have returned from Paris, where they have been to perfect themselves. Have you been to Paris, Madame Werner?"

"No."

"Ah, you must go there soon," said she. "On vit à Paris, et l'on végète ailleurs. Adele, my dear, do sing the little piece that Count B. sent you. Do you know Count B., Madame Werner?"

"No."

"He comes to us this summer," continued she; "a highly distinguished young man."

"Is your ladyship acquainted with the family of Merchant Dahl?" asked I, now wearied with being always the respondent.

"No—a little," replied she; "our circles are so different. Good, very good people, I believe. I have seen them a few times in company:—the Merchant—what do you call them?—the Dall—Dahlens, don't mix much in the better society of this place."

"Because they are so old, I presume," said I. "I have heard a great deal of their granddaughter, Miss Löfwen; she must be very amiable."

"The girl is pretty enough," conceded Mrs. von P., "but a poor little, misshapen, sickly creature; she will not live long. The whole family is of fragile health."

"A little, misshapen, sickly creature!" repeated I, greatly astonished; "what in all the world——"

But I had not much time to be astonished on this subject, as one of the gentlemen mentioned the new neighbour at Ramm (I begin to be half wearied of hearing of the new neighbour), and Mrs. von P., who seemed as if she feared the conversation might stagnate, threw herself zealously into the subject.

"O, that must be an interesting man!" said she; "a true héros du Roman! His name is Romanus or Romulus, and he is an Italian of a princely line. He murdered his first wife, and then carried off a beautiful English woman, with whom he went to America. There he had a duel with her brother, whom he killed—whereupon the beloved one died of grief. Now he travels all the world over to dissipate his sorrow, and to do good, for his benevolence is as great as his wealth."

I gaped in wonder.

"Such circumstances," continued Mrs. von P., speaking with great affectation, "belong so entirely to our eccentric and passionate times, that we cannot pass sentence on them according to severe moral laws. Deep, passionate, Byronian natures, require their own measure. One must take climate also into consideration, and not require from men under the suns of the south, that which one expects from those living in our colder north."

I wondered within myself at Mrs. von P.'s words, and especially by the expression "our eccentric and passionate age;" but it soon occurred to me that she drew her knowledge of the age only from novels. Observe, good Maria, that I say *only*—because novel-reading is not injurious, except to the exclusion of all other reading.

Long live novels, novel-readers, and novel-writers! especially as I myself am one of them! Mais revenons à nos moutons.

The young ladies sang and quavered, and seemed almost to have forgotten that there was such a phrase as to leave off. I went to them, and was mischievous enough to inquire

if they ever sang Swedish ? whereupon they answered "No," and began to speak of Malibran, of Paris, and such subjects, without speaking well of any of them.

Affectation, false taste, conceit, how I detest you ! and on that account I will now make my escape from the nest of these three owl-sisters.

Mrs. von P. took a ceremonious and cold adieu, without asking me to come again. I conjecture that music-lessons, and my acquaintance with *wall* and *quist* people, made Mrs. von P. feel that I was not fit to mix in their circles. Well —and she may be right there.

On our way home we met wagons laden with goods, for the new neighbour. After all I have heard of this man, if he should only be a common, every-day sort of a person, how vexed I shall be !

14th June.

Yesterday afternoon we were at home, and rejoiced on that account. Bear worked like a regular joiner, and I read to him that which I had written about our visiting-days. He was amused ; he laughed, and yet he blamed me at the same time for having spoken with so much severity of some persons ; neither was he quite satisfied with the judgment I had passed on the von P.'s.

" You call them," said he, " a collection of unfortunate pretensions, and yet you have seen them only once. It is very difficult, my dear Fanny, to pass judgment on men after a long acquaintance, and quite impossible to do so after one visit. Beyond this, many persons under different circumstances exhibit such different sides of their character. I have seen people affected and ridiculous in society, whom I have admired by a sick bed ; many, in one case wearisome and assuming, who in another have been discreet and agreeable. Others, again, have eccentricities at one time which they lose later in life ; many turn their best side inward, and perform the noblest actions, whilst the world is laughing at the fool's-cap which they exhibit. It may be so with this family."

" Granted, granted, dear Bear," said I ; " and I promise you that as soon as I become aware of the fair side, I will paint it in my best colours."

" But were it not better till then," argued he, " to place the faults more in the shadow ? It is exactly by such over-

hasty judgments that man injures his neighbour, for nobody reflects that one fault does not spoil the whole person."

"What would you have?" asked I; "you distress me: do you wish that I should throw all I have written into the fire?"

"No, let it be as it is," said he; "the mind of your reader will probably suggest what I have said."

"But for greater security, Bear, and to ease my own conscience, I will make her partaker of our little conversation."

And this, my best Maria, I have now done. Ah, I fear I shall always remain an over-hasty person, who judges by first impressions!

Forgive me, and love still, your
FRANSISKA.

CHAPTER III.

I COME from—a better world; I have been in the kingdom of heaven! Do you wish to know how it looks there?

There was a patriarch and his wife; and only to see that ancient, venerable couple, made the heart rejoice. Tranquillity was upon their brows, cheerful wisdom on their lips, and in their glance one read love and peace. A band of angels surrounded them: some little children, others blooming maidens. One of these particularly fixed my attention, because she so perfectly answered my idea of a seraph; not because all the other angels surrounded her, not because she was so beautiful—for she was not beautiful,—but because she looked so pure and loving, and because she seemed to be there for the happiness of all.

Now she was with the patriarchs, and mutual love beamed from glance and gesture; then she lifted angel-children in her arms, and kissed and embraced them; and then she spoke joyous, graceful words with the angel-maidens. She was a kind, heavenly being, whose happiness seemed to consist in love. She gave a sign, and nectar and delicious fruits were carried around, whilst she herself took care that the children had as much as their little hands could grasp.

The beauty of innocence seemed throned upon her white and gracefully moulded forehead, which affected me, and

awoke in me the presentiment of a heavenly vision. The expression of her beautiful blue eyes was clear and holy, and had that quiet bashfulness, that candour, which delights us in children. I never saw a glance which expressed so much inward goodness, which spoke so plainly that her whole world was pure blessedness. The light brown hair was of wonderful beauty and brightness, and the skin white and transparent. I never saw a form so much resembling a beautiful soul, nor a manner which so much reminded me of music.

I learned that this affectionate maiden was called Serena, and that the children had assembled to celebrate her birthday. All gathered themselves around her, all stood in need of her, all listened to her, and all were listened to by her.

"Ah, Serena!" said the angel-maidens, "sing us 'The Flower-Gatherer,' that lovely, sweet song."

"O Serena!" besought the angel-children, "play to us that we may dance."

"I will do all that you wish," said the kind Serena, "but what shall I do first? I fancy I must first play for the children, and then we will ask the stranger lady to sing us that beautiful song, because she sings it better certainly than I do."

Serena sate down and played, whilst the young danced and the old smiled, so that it was a pleasure to see. After the dance the fruit-basket was again carried round, and then Serena asked me, in the name of all, to sing "The Flower-Gatherer." I sate down to the piano, and the little band with oranges in their hands thronged around me; their rosy cheeks and joyful glances animating my song.

"Ah, once more! once more!" burst forth from all sides when I had ended; so I sang it, yet once and twice again, the little angels seeming as if they could not be satisfied. The patriarchs thanked me for my song even as heartily as the children, and I thanked—the poet.

Serena then introduced games of various kinds, and all was laughter and fun during these games; and whilst I sate by the patriarchs, there stole in one little angel who possessed a strong portion of earthly covetousness, and took something from the hoard of her sister. Serena, who at that moment was handing nectar to the patriarchs, followed the

child with her eyes, and then going after her, took her aside, set her on her knee, and said with a grave although mild countenance : " Why, little Eva, did you take your sister's apple,—was it right ? was that well done ? "

" She had two, and I had none !" stammered out the little Eva, frightened and ready to cry.

" Because you had eaten yours," remarked Serena ; " but in no case had you a right to take your sister's fruit. That was very wrong, Eva ! "

" I thought nobody saw me," said the little one, weeping.

" But if no one else saw you, God saw you ; and he does not love children who do that which is wrong. Go now and lay the apple down again, dear Eva."

Little Eva went and laid down the apple again (if great Eva had only done the same!) ; and with tears on her cheeks said to Serena, " But then, won't you love me any more ? "

" Will you promise me not again to take without permission that which does not belong to you ? " asked Serena softly, but seriously.

" O yes !" sighed the little one, " I won't do so again ! "

" Then I shall love you, and you shall be my dear little Eva again," said she, taking the child upon her knee, and letting it quietly weep on her bosom.

This little scene, of which I was a secret spectator whilst I was chatting with the old people, gave me a picture and a lesson which I shall not soon forget.

At the Dahls also, the new resident at Ramm was spoken of ; but not in the spirit of extravagant conjecture ; some things which were good and noble were related of him ; the man certainly was not Don Miguel—and there was joy over him in the kingdom of heaven.

In this kingdom of heaven there was a little sparrow, but not like any sparrow I ever before saw. It was tame, and full of a human kindness ; the angel-children were particularly charmed with it. All was laughter, bustle, and merriment, as the sparrow flew about, sitting ever and anon on their little heads, and " Gull-gul ! Gull-gul ! " was repeated by all the jubilant company.

So passed the whole evening, with games, dance, song, and laughter. At one time the angel-band, conducted by Serena, came and danced round the patriarchs, enclosing Bear and

his wife in the lovely joyful circle, till again breaking loose, in the midst of song, they dispersed to form new groups.

However beautiful and joyous it might be in the kingdom of heaven, still we must think of returning to our little earthly home; so, after we had supped with the angels, we set out on our way. But the worthy patriarchs and the lovely Serena prayed us so warmly and earnestly to come soon and spend a whole day with them, that we gave our hands upon it; and I must confess that I desired nothing better. On the way home I could talk of nothing but Serena, and went to sleep with her lovely image in my soul.

Perhaps in time I may come to see this family in a more prosaic light, and then you will receive a less poetical picture. Life wears oftener its every-day than its festival garb. This however I know, I have had a heavenly vision.

June 18th.

Away from home may be good, but at home is best! So have I thought a hundred times during the two pleasant days I have passed quietly in looking after my own affairs. I tame my Bear and my little animals. All goes on quite well. Six hens, three ducks, and two turkeys, are now my intimate acquaintance. I have caressed and fed the cows to-day. The fine creatures! The largest and handsomest of which I have christened Audumbla, in memory of the beautiful northern mythology, of which I have read in the symbolical lore of the Edda.

My Bear is a strange being. Since he has given up his little vices, he has acquired—God knows how!—continually a greater influence over me. This however is certain, that he is right good, and reasonable. Yesterday evening he came into our drawing-room with the pipe in his mouth, but stood at the doorway looking at me, and made such roguish, questioning grimaces, that I sprang up, embraced both him and his pipe, and drew them both into the room. I was so happy that the pipe did not hate the room—but—one would not like it every day.

19th.

Miss Hellevi Husgafvel—sprightliness to the very roof—supper on Svanö; and thus have you yesterday afternoon. Miss Hellevi is a very lively and clever person, almost too

lively for me. She seems to me like preserved ginger ; where one takes it now and then, one finds it refreshing, and exclaims delicate ! All day long is quite too much.

"Bear, come here, angel ! what say you to this comparison ?"

"That it is malicious, and that you yourself are ginger, you sea-cat!"

"Ginger ? that you are, yourself, you Bear !"

20th.

The sisters-in-law are come. Yesterday morning, just as Bear and I were thus skirmishing, we received a note from Ma chère mère, inviting us to go for the evening : in the first place, because she wished to see us ; and secondly, because she wished us to receive the relations with her, who were expected that evening at Carlsfors. "If the little wife will come the first," added she, "I shall be right glad to see her ; and for that purpose shall send my Norrköpings' carriage with the brown horses after dinner to Rosenvik. For this once I will burden my conscience by separating man and wife ; still, if they can come together, so much the pleasanter."

I was very curious to see the brothers-in-law and their wives. My husband, who was overjoyed by the thought of seeing again his beloved brother Peter, could not, however, on account of several patients, reach Carlsfors before evening ; so I went alone in the Norrköpings' carriage, which is pleasanter than the heaven-chariot.

I found Lagman Hök with Ma chère mère. He comes regularly once a week, and brings from the town where he lives, newspapers and law documents ; for Ma chère mère, who has a strong sense of right, has many law-suits. She talks with him a great deal about her affairs, in which he takes more interest than in his own ; and this conversation begins when coffee comes in, for during dinner she shows herself a most agreeable hostess to all her guests. This lasts till six o'clock ; then, says Ma chère mère, "Now Lagman we will walk," and the two parade, side by side, up and down the large room. This time may be regarded as one of rest ; for the two never speak a word, excepting that Ma chère mère, who goes with her hands behind her back, says

unceasingly, yet almost inaudibly, and only by the movement of the tongue, “Trallala, trallala, trallal! trallala, trallala, trall!” This walk, which has come to be called trall, lasts probably half an hour, on which Ma chère mère says, “Now Lagman let us sit!” on which the two sit down and begin to chat again, but not of business, but of the good old times; of the then living remarkable people; relate anecdotes and drink tea. So have they paraded, tralled and chatted, above twenty years!

The Lagman sometimes has wonderful fits of absence: he will place himself, for instance, within a doorway or against a wall, and there stand for hours in deep thought without once moving from the spot. Sometimes at table, too, if he would pour out a glass of water or wine, he never notices when the glass is full, but keeps pouring on till it runs over the table. Ma chère mère is not much pleased when such accidents occur; but she never speaks one unfriendly word to him on the subject, but jokes him merely on his “poetical distractions.” Nevertheless, if she see his large hand reaching towards a caraf, she mostly is beforehand with him.

But I let my pen fly like a wild bird, from one object to another. I return now to the evening when the relations were expected.

Both Ma chère mère and her house were in their most festival garb. The Slurka, or helmet-cap, sate high and proud on her serious brow, and she marched through the large room by the Lagman’s side with the air and carriage of a general. They were busied with the trall. All the doors stood open, and all the steps were crowded with servants in livery. Everything looked quite festive.

“Welcome now, my dear Fransiska,” said Ma chère mère, reaching to me her hand with a stately bearing; “you will now make the acquaintance of your new family. We shall see what these young ladies are like; we will pass our judgment on them—yes, that we will! In the mean time, my heart! go and do what you like whilst I finish my trall.”

I availed myself of this permission, and went to see how the chambers of the sisters-in-law looked. I found the coarse toilet-covers had been replaced with others much finer, which gave me pleasure. In every other respect, too, the rooms were comfortably furnished; all was substantial, con-

venient, and clean ; but I missed something of the poetry, something of the luxury of life, without which life and home would only be mere necessary establishments.

"*Ma chère mère*," thought I, "will leave this to the ladies themselves, will leave them to beautify their own little world, according to their own taste." Although I could not but confess that this was best, I felt irresistibly compelled to anticipate some little, and going, therefore, into the garden, gathered a quantity of flowers, which grow there in super-abundance ; hastily wove two garlands, one of which I hung over each looking-glass, and then disposing glasses of flowers about the rooms, pleased myself in no small degree with the friendly aspect they gave. Presently, however, I heard a strong voice behind me. "Yes, indeed, my little one ! it is your pleasure, is it—to go ramping about in my garden, and among my flowers ? What did you think I should say to that ?"

I turned round and looked somewhat terrified at the severe countenance of *Ma chère mère*.

"Now, now, don't look so hebeté," said she, her countenance changing ; and patting me on the cheek, "I will say no more than that you are poetical, and if you choose to fill the chambers of your sisters-in-law with plunder, that is your business, not mine—the thing, however, looks very pretty. I see, my dear, that you are not without taste ; and now, if you will have a cup of tea, come out with me, for my captain-commandant—so *Ma chère mère* calls her stomach—has no inclination to wait for the young gentry. Hök is standing at the saloon door in one of his reveries, but we'll see if we cannot wake him."

As I followed her into the saloon, I heard my husband's steps in the next room. I had merely time to whisper to her, "When he asks after me, you have not seen me ;" and hastily hid myself behind an open door.

Ma chère mère winked her approbation of my little trick, and Bear entered.

"Where is my wife ?" asked he, as soon as he had greeted her and kissed her hand.

"I have had no intelligence of her," replied she very gravely ; "I have not seen her at all."

"Heavens ! where is she then ?" exclaimed he, in such an

agitated, terrified manner as quite affected me; so after he had looked on all sides, and was just turning to leave the room, I sprang forward and clasped my arms round him.

Ah! how sweet it is to know that one is beloved! Thank God for it!

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed out Ma chère mère, at our embracing.

Bear was quite excited at having found his little wife again, and at the prospect of soon embracing his beloved brother.

Ma chère mère seated herself at the top of the great saloon in her great arm-chair covered with red damask; called me to sit near her; and then ordered Bear, Lagman Hök, and Tuttin, to arrange themselves in a half circle around her. I saw by all this that she was bent upon a great scene, which should be imposing to the young ladies; for thus, in order to approach, they would have to traverse the long saloon. I assure you that my heart was full of sympathy for them; and in the depths of my soul I thanked my husband for his kindness in letting me make Ma chère mère's acquaintance in the impromptu manner I did, thus preventing me having to pass the ordeal of a solemn presentation, which would have been a horror and stumbling-block to me.

Ma chère mère's strong nerves prevented her having any idea of such feelings; and while we sate at our post, she merrily and graphically told of her first presentation at court; and how, for a long time beforehand, she had practised making her reverences before five chairs; and then, how these reverences, after this, were performed before the crowned heads themselves.

Ma chère mère described the whole scene and the principal persons with so much life and spirit, that I forgot where I sate, and why I sate there, when a carriage was heard approaching.

Ma chère mère paused, and I started up, so did my husband, but she laid immediately her heavy hand interdictingly upon my arm, and said to us both, "Sit still! The old one shall be first to bid them welcome to her house, and the old one will await them here!"

She looked solemn and dignified, and I sate down again with a beating heart. Bear looked undetermined: but as

he listened to the commotion and sound of voices in the hall, he said, "It is Jean Jacques!" and sate down again.

The next moment steps were heard, and with a loud voice a servant announced "Baron Jean Jacques and his lady!"

A silken dress rustled, and a lady entered, probably of my age, but taller, conducted by a gentleman. She looked altogether comme il faut, stepped quickly, but with great self-possession, through the room towards Ma chère mère, who raised herself majestically, and advancing a few paces to meet her, looked highly imposing. The young lady curtseyed very deeply, and kissed the offered hands as I had done, whilst Ma chère mère in return kissed her, but only on the forehead; embraced her, and bade her welcome, hoping she would find herself agreeably at home in this house. Next she saluted Jean Jacques, and that exactly in the same way as she had saluted my husband before.

After that we were introduced to our new relatives: I sate down near my sister-in-law; at first we were a little excited, but soon calming ourselves, became most friendly, and engaged in an agreeable conversation; in short, I greatly admired this first-seen sister-in-law, by name Jane Marie. She is not handsome, but has something distinguished in her appearance, whilst her form is exquisite. Her remarks and demeanour show both gentleness and understanding; her toilet also is very pleasing and appropriate; a brown silk dress, a gold chain and watch, a simple but stylish bonnet trimmed with clear blue, which accorded admirably with her hair. It always gives me pleasure to see a lady who understands the art of dressing well. It is a sign both of understanding and taste.

"But where is Peter?" asked my husband at least seven times before the first salutations were over.

"Peter comes later," answered Jean Jacques at length, "that is, if he come at all to-night. It pleased Ebba," continued he, "to go to sleep at E., where we dined, and she would not wake. Peter called and knocked to no purpose, so at last I and my wife left them, in order that Ma chère mère might not expect us in vain. I thought Ebba might just as well have slept in the carriage, since she never looks at the country, but sits wrapped up in her double crape-cap."

Ma chère mère slightly moved her eyebrows, and Bear

drew his down. I looked at Jane Marie ; she smiled and shrugged her shoulders. At that very moment a carriage drove up to the door.

"There he is!" exclaimed Bear, and rushed out before Ma chère mère could call him back, like a bomb through the open door, to meet his beloved brother. She shook her head, however, and looked angry, but I loved him all the more for his affection to his brother.

Behold now the sister-in-law No. 2.

A slight little figure floated in petulantly, but gracefully ; the eyes half shut ; a little straw hat hanging on the arm ; a little cap with rose-coloured ribbons inclined to one ear, and kissing, as it were, on the other side several locks of dark brown hair which flowed negligently forth. Her husband followed her with his eyes, whilst he was stopped in the doorway by a second embrace from his brother.

Ma chère mère raised herself majestically, as on the first occasion, and advanced three steps towards the little sylph ; but she, to our great astonishment, floated past without looking up to her, and throwing herself negligently into the arm-chair from which Ma chère mère had the moment before risen, exclaimed, "Ah, I am so fatigued, so fatigued, so warm that I must die ; ah !" whilst the silken robe which she wore, falling open, showed a fine cambric dress ; and, still further the very prettiest of all little feet and ankles.

O that you could have seen Ma chère mère ! She stood as if thunderstruck ; whilst Peter, rushing forward, seized Ebba's hand, and endeavouring to raise her from the chair, whispered, "Ebba, in Heaven's name, bethink thee ! Ebba, it is Ma chère mère."

"Heavens !" exclaimed Ebba, like one wakened out of a dream, and looked up with a pair of beautiful brown eyes to the great lady, just as people look up to a church steeple. Ma chère mère, on her side, approached her with a countenance that seemed to express, "Whatever sort of an extraordinary little creature are you ?"

As the two were about to meet, Ebba snatched her hand suddenly from her husband's, and springing upon a chair threw both her arms round Ma chère mère's neck, and kissed her with all the grace and freedom of a child. This seemed to make a peculiar impression on the elder lady, who, grasping

her little person in both her large hands, placed her like a child in her arms, and carried her under the chandelier, which was then lit up with the beams of the setting sun, and contemplated the cherub's head surrounded with light. Ebba laughed, and we all were obliged to laugh too, whilst Ma chère mère's loud "ha! ha! ha!" resounded above all. She patted and pinched the cheeks of the ill-trained but lovely young creature, till her fine dark eyebrows contracted themselves, and she exclaimed again and again, "Let me go!" But Ma chère mère, who wished somewhat to punish her, jested still with her as people jest with a child; but at length, as tears filled her eyes, she shook her friendlily by the hand, kissed her forehead, and saluted Peter with the words:

"Chastise your wife, my dear son, otherwise she will chastise you."

Ebba greeted me most ungraciously, never once looked at Bear; but throwing herself feet and all on a sofa, looked through the room, and on the company, with an air of indifference. Ma chère mère made no remark, but saw all this with a certain bitterness of mien which, according to my thought, seemed to say, "We shall soon bring you into order, little malapert."

Notwithstanding all this, Ebba is from head to foot the very prettiest little creature that I ever saw. She resembles more a fairy than a human being; but her countenance is somewhat disfigured by an expression of superciliousness and pertness, which especially plays around the little saucy mouth and the dilated nostril. It is true that she is very young, but she seems to me to be one of those young creatures who are particularly hard to train. Bear seemed to think the same, and looked upon her and Peter with a troubled air. Peter, to all appearance, is desperately in love with his little humoursome wife, who, on her part, does not appear to trouble herself particularly about him; nor does it seem extraordinary that he has not inspired love in such a young, childish creature. Peter is singularly plain in person; has a very large nose, and his yellow-grey hair stands towards all points of the compass. In manner, he is taciturn and reserved; yet his eyes, which are handsome, have an expression which is speaking, and full of soul. He sate the whole evening as if sunk into himself; pressed Bear's hand sometimes,

and glanced often at his wife, who lay on the sofa and slept. The evening would have been very tedious had it not been for Jean Jacques, who, having travelled abroad but a short time before, related to us various and very interesting accounts of mechanical and industrial undertakings, such as railroads, the Thames Tunnel, etc. Jean Jacques, unlike Peter, is very good-looking ; has the power of being amusing ; and appears to be full of life and knowledge. Ma chère mère was greatly pleased with his narratives ; and all, indeed, listened to them with the greatest interest, so much, in fact, on my part, that I was sorry when supper was announced.

On the announcement of supper we all turned towards Ebba, who, indescribably pretty, lay asleep on the sofa, like a rosebud folded in leaves. I said something of the kind as we stood round her, and was thanked by her husband with one of his fine glances ; then bending over her, he kissed her cheek in order to wake her, saying, “ Ebba, my angel, rise !”

“ Why cannot you let me rest in quiet ? How unbearable you are !” was her loving reply ; and she would have composed herself anew to sleep had not Ma chère mère elevated her strong voice.

“ My dear child,” said she, “ hear ! if you are not ready to come with us to table this moment you will have nothing to eat. Don’t imagine that anybody will give themselves trouble on your account.”

The little one opened her eyes in the greatest astonishment, raised herself, and without another word Ma chère mère took her hand and led her into the dining-room. Ebba allowed herself to be led, but with a look of indescribable ill-humour. Ma chère mère, however, was extremely amiable towards her, seated her by her, and showed her a thousand little attentions. There was something so irresistibly inciting in Ma chère mère’s friendliness that even Ebba yielded, like the rose to the rays of the sun ; the ill-humoured countenance vanished, and gave place to one which was joyful and amiable ; and then, indeed, she became unspeakably lovely, and her little Love’s-head appeared quite bewitching. She ate, laughed, and chatted with Ma chère mère, who was much occupied with her. Peter looked quite happy ; Jean Jacques talked with Tuttin, who looked no less happy, about genuine English roast beef and French omelette soufflé. I

kept up a continued conversation with Jane Marie, whose obliging demeanour and agreeable style of conversation pleased me more and more; Bear sate silent near his brother, and looked dissatisfied.

At the conclusion of the meal, Ma chère mère ordered a steaming bowl of punch to be brought in, filled the glasses for us all, and gave a sign with the hand for the servants to withdraw. We all at once became suddenly silent, as if expecting something extraordinary; and Ma chère mère, after she had cleared her throat, raised her sonorous voice, and spoke with earnestness and strength to the following effect:

“ MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS,

“ I will say this to you, because I see you all here assembled round my table and in my house for the first time; I will say this to you, my children, because I still wish to see you often here, as three united and happy families.

“ In an old regulation for soldiers, which was in possession of my deceased husband, General Mansfelt, it was said that only in the moment when the fight commenced should the order be given to the troops, and this order consisted but of three words—‘ Do your best! ’

“ This rule may also be of some value to the married. Books of education, the advice of fathers and mothers, the precepts of teachers, continue to the altar of Hymen; but there they all pause, and merely say to the wedded pair—‘ Do your best! ’ After this, truly, it is not an easy task to give counsel. Every marriage has its own freemasonry, the one unlike the other, with which it is not well for the uninitiated to meddle. But some good advice, my children, you may listen to with profit from an old lady who has seen some little of the world, and who has had some little experience in the freemasonry of married life; and if you, in your married career, profit by these counsels, it will be well for you. Thus—

“ If, my children, you would be happy, avoid sour looks and changeful humours. By these people entice Satan into their houses. ‘ A little cloud,’ says the proverb, ‘ can hide both sun and moon.’ Yes, my daughters, guard against what may be called ‘ bad weather’ in the house; and you, my sons,

take heed that you are not the November storm that calls it there.

“Remember what the proverb says: ‘Peace mendeth, strife rendeth.’ I have, my children, seen that among you already which I do not like—yes, I have seen it. But I hope it will all pass by, and be amended: therefore I will say no more about it.

“Deceive not one another in small things nor in great. One little single lie has, before now, disturbed a whole married life. A small cause has often great consequences. Fold not the hands together and sit idle—‘Laziness is the devil’s cushion.’ Do not run much from home. ‘He who is not missed is never wanted.’ ‘One’s own hearth is gold’s worth;’ remember that ‘early weed is sour feed.’

“Many a marriage, my friends, which begins like the rosy morning, falls away like a snow-wreath. And why, my friends? Because the married pair neglect to be as well-pleasing to each other after marriage as before. Endeavour always to please one another, my children; but at the same time, keep God in your thoughts. Lavish not all your love on to-day, for remember that marriage has its to-morrow likewise, and its day after to-morrow too. Spare, as one may say, fuel for the winter.

“Consider, my daughters, what the word housewife* expresses. The married woman is her husband’s domestic faith: in her hands he must be able to confide house and family; be able to entrust to her the key of his heart, and the padlock of his store-room. His honour and his home are under her keeping: his well-being is in her hand. Think of this!

“And you, my sons, be faithful husbands and good fathers of families. Act so that your wives shall esteem and love you.

“And what more shall I say to you, my children? Read the Word of God industriously; that will conduct you through storm and calm, and safely bring you to the haven at last. And for the remainder, do your best! I have done mine. God help and bless you altogether!”

With these words she extended her arms as if to bless us,

* Housewife, in Swedish Hustru; that is, derivatively the house-faith or trust

made a solemn greeting with the head, and emptied her glass to the bottom.

Ebba was insolent enough to let a very genteel yawn be audible, nor did she even raise her glass, but reclining backward in the chair, closed her eyes. Jane Marie emptied hers with a very becoming air. I had at the beginning of the speech difficulty to refrain from smiling at the ugly grimaces which Bear continu'd to make, but by degrees the earnestness and energy of Ma chère mère's words took hold of me, Bear became still, and by the time the speech was ended our eyes met, and we heartily drank to each other and to Ma chère mère.

When the skål was drunk, Ma chère mère rung upon a glass with a knife. The servants entered, and taking, with the stiffest general's mien, the arm of Lagman Hök, she ordered us to pass two and two before her—mustered us, as it were. In passing her she clapped me on the shoulder, and said, ‘ You are yet the least! ’ (This is not true, since I have measured myself with Ebba, and am half a head taller than she, but Ma chère mère has pleasure in jesting with me.) Ebba, however, would not arrange herself according to command, would walk by herself; and in order to escape from her husband, she skipped like a bird round about us, and among us. Ma chère mère closed the procession with Lagman Hök.

We sate chatting for some time after supper, and then Ma chère mère conducted the young people to their rooms. I followed, and Lars Anders also, who would not be left out in anything. Ebba's good-humour continued, but it exhibited itself in laughter and jests over the old-fashioned furniture; on which account Ma chère mère read her a grave lecture, to which the strange young creature listened attentively, and when it was ended kissed her hand and curtseyed with comic humility. She is a sweet, but totally spoiled child, and appears singularly ill-calculated for the wife of the grave, quiet Peter. Jane Maria, on the contrary, seemed perfectly satisfied with everything, and remarked my flowers with delight; in fact, showing by her rational, well-bred behaviour a perfect contrast to the eccentric wildness of Ebba. Ma chère mère was in high good-humour, and jested with us all, if not in the most refined manner, yet certainly with great wit. There is

something peculiar about her, which captivates every one. I observed also this evening, how, through her clear-headed, unequivocal arrangements, she gives satisfaction and security to all around her. Thus she immediately assigned to every one of us our places, and one soon finds the advantage of regulating oneself according to her rules.

Ma chère mère invited Bear and me to dine the next day with the family. I was glad of it, for I wish to see them intimately. I anticipate for myself a friend in Jane Marie, and my heart covets female friends; for since I have lost you, Maria, I am conscious of a great want in my life, which writing cannot supply; and if I won Jane Marie's love, I should not have the less friendship for you.

But to return to the last evening, to Bear, to Rosenvik. Arrived there, I imparted to him my remarks on brothers and sisters-in-law. But he was so deep in one reflection, that he only replied to all I said with a sigh, and the words "Poor Peter!"

Somewhat impatient over the everlasting "Poor Peter!" I said at length, "Well then, Peter must act wisely, like a certain Bear; he must improve his wife by kindness and reason, and then he must submit himself to her tyranny." Bear looked kindly at me, said pretty things to me, but then after all wound up with the words "Poor Peter!"

He has a sort of hatred of Ebba; calls her a witch, and will not even admit that she is beautiful: on the contrary, Jane Marie pleases him as much as she pleases me.

I go now to dress for dinner, and send you a thousand kisses with my letter.

CHAPTER IV.

Rosenvik, June 21st.

THE dinner went off very well yesterday. Ma chère mère was cheerful and kind. Ebba well-mannered, and unspeakably lovely; Jane Marie perfectly elegant and well-dressed; yet I could have desired a little more freedom, and have wished also the large seigné away from the forehead, for nothing pleases me which overshadows the brow. Jean Jacques was entertaining with his interesting relations. Lagman Hök, however, poured half a caraf of water over

the table, which greatly embarrassed him, so much so indeed that some time afterwards, when Jean Jacques was describing, with great energy, a certain winged steam-carriage in which people might travel through the air, to which the Lagman appeared to listen with the most fixed attention, thereby animating Jean Jacques to extraordinary energy, he suddenly interrupted him with the question, "Pardon me, Mr. Baron, but of which caraft were you speaking?" at which Ma chère mère laughed, and Jean Jacques looked annoyed.

Jean Jacques talks a great deal. To-day, I found it somewhat wearying, especially after dinner. At length I heard only a continued hum, out of which the words—Railroad, Manchester, Tunnel, Steam-engine, Penny Magazine, alone struck my ear. The more Jean Jacques described, the sleepier I became, and at length he fairly gave up his unworthy listener. But a singular occurrence speedily awoke me out of my drowsiness.

Ma chère mère was sitting on the sofa arranging the well-used patience-cards for the blockade of Copenhagen; Lagman Hök was sitting near her, taking snuff; Jane Marie was lecturing Ebba, who had no doubt much need of it, but who seemed to profit little by it; and a young servant was handing about coffee, when Jean Jacques exclaimed, "Heavens how like he is to Bruno!"

All at once Ma chère mère's patience-table received a blow which sent it with the blockade of Copenhagen spinning to the floor; yet no one looked at anything but Ma chère mère. She at first became deadly pale, and then grew yellow. The nose was contracted, the lips blue, and the breath emitted with a strong hissing sound. Then raising herself, like a fermenting billow, she shook threateningly her clenched fist at Jean Jacques, while the eyes seemed starting wildly from her head, and the slurka seemed to lift itself aloft on her hair. Jean Jacques also grew pale, and drew himself back. It was terrible to see her; and I awaited, almost breathless, some fearful catastrophe. But she stood as if stiffened into that threatening attitude, immovable and speechless, as if under the spell of a terrible enchantment, or as if some horror-exciting ghost had been conjured up before her. For a long time she stood thus; and only the wild, audible breathing

some evidence of the strong inward emotion,—rage or agony, I knew not which.

Whilst I gazed upon her thus, my terror changed into anguish of heart, and I was about to hasten to her when Bear held me back ; and whilst he threw his arm round my waist to detain me, he himself sat still and attentively observed her. No one approached her ; and after a few moments the fearful emotion passed off by itself. The clenched hand sunk ; the colour of life returned to the countenance, and the blue lips and her eyes grew milder ; she breathed deeply several times, always lower, as if she sighed, and then, without speaking a word, or even looking round on any one, passed, with slow steps, from the room, closing the door after her. Notwithstanding this I would have followed, had not Bear restrained me ; but seeing me restless and excited, he took me aside, and in a few words gave an explanation of this extraordinary and painful scene.

“ Ma chère mère,” said he, “ had herself one son, called Bruno.”

“ And is he dead ?” interrupted I, interrogatively.

“ Yes.”

“ And on this account,” asked I, astonished, “ can his name and the remembrance of him agitate her so much ?”

“ Not merely on that account,” he replied ; “ he occasioned her great sorrow, and everything that reminds her of him, especially the pronouncing his name, agitates her thus powerfully. But one must allow these outbreaks to pass over unobserved ; they pass over quickest when she is left entirely to herself.”

“ But what became of her son ?” I asked.

“ It is a long history,” he replied ; “ I will tell you another time, Fanny.”

“ Another time is a villain !” said I. “ I hate another time ! I can wait no longer than this evening, Bear.”

“ Well then,” said he, “ this evening. But we must not longer stand whispering here.”

As we returned to the company, we found Lagman Hök sitting on the sofa at the patience-table, endeavouring to rearrange the pieces exactly as they were before they were upset, that Ma chère mère, on her return, might not, by any

circumstance, be reminded of the scene which had just occurred. When he had succeeded in arranging the pieces, he took snuff, and sneezed nine times successively, which convulsed Ebba with laughter. His solicitude for Ma chère mère affected me; such attention is amiable. So ought friends to have care one for another.

I believe I have never sketched the Lagman's portrait. Behold it then done hastily. He may be probably sixty years of age, is thin and tall, has long feet, long hands, a long neck, and a long countenance, in which traces of small-pox and furrows leave no beauty, till you pass over a great hooked nose, and meet with a pair of eyes which have in their deep sockets a quiet, kind, and pleasant expression. They remind one of the impression made upon one by the friendly shimmering light seen through the windows of a hostel on a cold autumn evening. He seems as if he had a peg in every limb, and never did I see so long and stiff a back as his! I never can see him without wondering how he ever can be suspected of poetical fancies. Ma chère mère, however, has firm faith on this point. For the rest I can say little, as, excepting with Ma chère mère, he seldom speaks with any one. His voice, his whole demeanour, is soft; yet, although he is so quiet and silent, one can never forget that he is in the room; for, excellent man as he certainly is, he takes such an immense quantity of snuff, that heaps of it lie where he has been sitting. Yet, after all, there is no harm in that!

Whilst Lagman Hök laid the patience in order, and Jane Marie, Jean Jacques, and I, were talking of music, Ebba had opportunity to exhibit her good breeding. In the first place, she drew the needles out of my stocking, overturned Lagman Hök's snuff-box, and, after other misdemeanours, crept behind Bear and Peter, who had laid their heads together in a deep conversation, and sewed their coat-laps together. The good brothers foreboded nothing wrong, neither did I, who, wishing to take advantage of the fine weather, proposed a walk, to which all consented, and both stood up, when ratsch! kratsch! resounded it, and the two coat-laps were violently torn asunder. Bear gave a desperate leap, and made the most horrific of grimaces. It was impossible for me to avoid loud laughter; and, in a paroxysm of childish delight, Ebba threw herself on the sofa. Peter seemed not to know how

to take the affair ; and Bear, who at first was irritated against both Ebba and me, I believe, swore good-humouredly at us both. Jane Marie shook her head, and yet laughed ; but afterwards, as she sate down to her beautiful tapestry, and saw that there also Ebba had been at work, she became quite red, and, casting a stern glance upon her, said something in a very bitter tone about “unpardonable impertinence.” And, certainly, it is provoking to have a beautiful piece of work so disarranged. It was easier for me to console myself for my drawn-out knitting needles.

Whilst Lagman Hök sate quite still, endeavouring to collect together his snuff, I proposed the walk anew. All assented, excepting Ebba, who, lying negligently on the sofa, declared that, as long as she remained in the country, she would never set her foot out of doors ; that she abominated country dust and country roads, and that green was injurious to her eyes, etc. In vain we tried to persuade her ; in vain Jane Marie talked to her of her childish folly. She continued wilfully adhering to her determination, and Peter—stopped at home with her. And now, like my husband, I must sigh to myself “ Poor Peter !”

Lagman Hök also remained still sitting where he was, probably waiting the return of his friend ; and, under pretence of fetching a shawl, I stole to the door of Ma chère mère’s chamber, and listened there full of restless sympathy. I could hear that she had violent vapours, with long spasmodic yawnings, and, greatly relieved on her account, followed my party on their walk.

The weather was lovely. Jean Jacques talked with his brother of the new arrangements he intended to make on the estate, and blamed Ma chère mère’s old-fashioned management ; to which the other replied by a variety of wry faces, and by puffing prodigious volumes of smoke out of his pipe. Jane Marie and I fell into discourse on Bulwer’s and Miss Martineau’s excellent novels, which gave me pleasure. I found her well-read, and acquainted with several languages, whereupon we agreed to read together Dante’s *Commedia Divina*. That will be charming !

Whilst we were rejoicing on this subject, we turned into a lovely wood-path by a mill, the rushing of whose waters we had heard through the wood, when suddenly I became aware

of an object which made me pause and pluck Bear by the sleeve, to make him observant of the same. All stood still, and looked to the left, where the sun shone upon an open green space. A man of a strong, almost athletic figure, in a dark, handsome riding-dress, was passing under the oaks which grew there. He passed slowly, his arms crossed over his breast, and his head depressed, as if in deep thought. Near, or, more correctly speaking, behind him, went a handsome, glossy black horse, whose bridle was richly set with studs of silver. The rein hung loose, and the beautiful head now bent itself to the grass, and now caressingly raised itself to the shoulder of its master, who appeared accustomed to this, and left his faithful attendant at full liberty.

We had only a glimpse of the man's profile, for he was passing from us, but it gave us the augury of a dark, gloomy countenance. Thus went man and horse onward, in friendly peace with each other, deeper into the wood, and vanished at last from our view. But our conjectures followed him, and we came to the fixed and unanimous conclusion that we had seen the so-much-spoken-of mysterious neighbour at Ramm. And now, whether he be called Romulus, or Romanus, whether he may justify Mrs. von P.'s romance or not, this is certain, that his appearance before us, and his exterior, had a truly romantic air. I confess that I am quite curious to see more of him, for I am convinced that if I could only see him face to face, I should immediately be able to say whether he be a spy, or merely a good sort of fellow who is tired of himself; whether he be a Don Miguel or a Howard, as the account we heard of him at the Dahls might lead me to suspect.

When we returned to the house, after about an hour's wandering, we found Ma chère mère sitting in the drawing-room by her patience-table, and Lagman Hök beside her, all looking as if nothing remarkable had happened, except that Ma chère mère's countenance was unusually pale and grave. She motioned to us kindly on our entrance, but spoke with no one. Tuttin gave us tea, and then Jane Marie sate down to the piano, and played a heavy piece from Herz, more difficult, as it seemed to me, than beautiful. But how she plays! she is a perfect mistress of the piano; the only pity is, that she has no voice, else we would sing together; but, however,

she can accompany me. I am fortunate in having her for a sister-in-law: what a difference between her and Ebba. Ebba, however, through the whole of the evening was amiable, excepting that she insisted on everybody dancing, and as nobody showed an inclination for this, she began to dance by herself in the next room, and sang the while very prettily. Peter devoured her with his eyes; and I wondered not at it, for she is a little Grace, when she is gentle and good-humoured. Partly to please her, and partly led by a secret desire for dancing myself, I enticed, after a few minutes, company to her. We led in Jean Jacques, and at last Peter, and danced for a while in the gaiety of our hearts, to her indescribable joy.

But in a while the gentlemen grew tired and left us, and then Ebba, seating herself in a corner of the sofa near me, began to tell of all the balls of the former winter which she had attended in Stockholm, and how she was dressed, and how often, especially by this person and the other, she was engaged to dance, till an irresistible fit of yawning seized me, and would soon have conducted me to the arms of sleep, had not an overloud talking in the ante-room made me interrupt Ebba's discourse, in order to hasten there.

Ma chère mère played Boston, with Jane Marie, Lagman Hök, and Bear; and was now angry with Jane Marie, who, as I suppose, played better than I, and some way or other had made Ma chère mère bête. I only heard the words, "How can you think of not following, when you have four trumps and the king of spades in hand?"

"I don't think of following," replied Jane Marie, in a tone of vexation, "when I see that I cannot make my play."

"And on that account I am to become bête," said Ma chère mère, angrily; "and I was renonce in clubs, and you in diamonds!"

They were quite at strife; but this scene was interrupted by the entrance of the book-keeper, who came in to complain of two stable boys, who refused to obey his commands. Ma chère mère allowed him to state distinctly the nature of his commands, and the refusal of the boys; and as this evidenced great frowardness on their parts, her countenance became severe, and she started up hastily. Jean Jacques stood up

also; but she motioned him down again, went out, and returned almost immediately in her Januarius and cap, and, accompanied by the complainant, went off with great strides for the stable.

"How has it gone?" asked Bear, as in about ten minutes she returned, apparently refreshed by the rectification.

"How can it be other than right?" returned she, cheerfully. "I gave them a good blowing-up; thus they perceive whereabouts they are, and then I should like to see if they would dare to disobey:—for the rest, there was no danger with the people: Tannerström is too easy, and that he must be told too. But so it is;—all would use the axe, but nobody fetch the handle; all would be masters, but nobody will bear the burden."

Supper was announced; and she was, as usual, the most polite and active of hosts. All trace of the afternoon's scene had vanished.

Late in the evening, as we were once more in our quiet home, I asked and received from Bear the following explanation of the circumstance which disturbed Ma chère mère's peace, and here you have, as nearly as possible in his own words, a strange and dark history.

"Ma chère mère had, by General Mansfelt, one only son, who was called Bruno, after his father. His birth nearly cost the life of the mother, and that which she had bought so dearly was more precious to her than life itself. More than once had she been seen on her knees by his cradle, as if worshipping him. Many a night, when a slight indisposition has made his sleep restless, she sate and watched silently by him. She suckled him herself;—scarcely would permit any one beside herself to nurse him, scarcely to touch him. He slept in her bosom, he rested on her knee; her arms were his world, and they encircled with undying love the early despotic and wild boy, who yet, on his side, hung on her neck with passionate tenderness, and seemed to find rest nowhere but upon her bosom. It was beautiful to see them together. They were the lioness and her cub, who, in a union of savage strength and deep tenderness, combat together and caress at the same time. Thus the relation between mother and son was extraordinary, and sometimes hostile, even from the cradle. One day, as she laid him, a

child of but nine months old, to her breast, either in hunger or passion he bit her severely with his young coming teeth. Transported with the pain, the mother gave him a blow. The child let go the breast, and refused from that moment ever to take it again. He was weaned; for the mother could not tolerate the idea of his being nourished with the milk of a nurse. Afterwards, in his eighth year, as she would have given him a well-deserved correction, he turned like a young lion, and struck her.

" Still, in the midst of scenes which exhibited ungovernable character, instances almost daily occurred which showed unlimited power of self-sacrifice. She threw herself between him and every danger; he would kiss the very traces of her feet. When they met, even after a short separation, it was ever with an outbreak of the warmest love; still the next moment, perhaps, they would be at strife with each other. This state of feeling increased with years. Both were of the same powerful, determined character. They seemed unable to live either together or apart.

" It would have been impossible to find anywhere a handsomer boy than Bruno; and yet, although the mother worshipped him in her heart, her sense of justice was so strict that she never, not even in the slightest instance, favoured him to his step-brothers' disadvantage. Never, if he deserved punishment, was he spared before them; never had a preference shown to him in regard of pleasure or reward. In no way had he the advantage of them, excepting in the caresses of his mother.

" We were all brought up with severity; and as regards money, were too scantily supplied. For myself I always had an inclination towards economy; nevertheless I was compelled to have recourse to my own innocent industry to supply myself with postage-money, or the means to obtain any little outlay which Ma chère mère considered superfluous. Hence I became, in secret, a carpenter.

" Bruno was naturally extravagant, and prone to dissipation, and very early, in order to gratify his palate, or to appease his thirst for pleasure, resorted to less innocent means. He purloined what he could not obtain voluntarily, first from his brothers, then from the domestics. But no one dared to punish him for this, or to represent it to his mother

for the fiery-tempered boy, gifted with almost herculean strength, had obtained great power over his brothers, and was feared not only by them, but by all the household. He was beloved by none, excepting by me. I cannot exactly say what it was in him which captivated me so. I admired his great natural abilities; his wild and witty tricks often decoyed me to smile, at the same time that I was compelled to blame; but what operated most upon me was, that he really liked me."

Bear said this with an agitated voice, remained silent a few moments, and then continued :

"I must do him the justice, however, to say, that he never was disobedient if people spoke to him with reason and mildness. More than once he abandoned at my request unworthy pursuits, or wept bitterly at my representations, at the same time that he confessed his unfortunate first steps in the path of vice.

"But I was at this time seldom at home. Much older than he, I had finished my academical life as he began his, and was almost always from home in the pursuit of my medical profession.

"The influence which a child, a little girl, had over Bruno from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year was very extraordinary. This was that Serena Löfwen with whom you were so greatly pleased the other day in the city. She was at that time a lovely, quiet, but sickly child. Ma chère mère, who had always a great esteem for Madame Dahl, prevailed upon her for three years to bring her during the summer months to Ramm, in order, partly by the water of a mineral spring and partly by the fresh country air, to improve Serena's health. The little angel-like child interested the wild Bruno, and it was wonderful to see what constraint he had over himself, and of what self-denial he was capable on her account; how he left all, to carry her out into the woods about Ramm; to caress her, or to sit quietly by and watch her while she slept. On holidays, or whenever he had a holiday, he went wandering forth early in the morning with a basket of eatables in his hand and Serena on his arm, and seldom were the two seen again before evening. All this improved Serena's health, and softened the temper of Bruno. One prayer from her childish lips, or her tears, were to him a

more effectual incentive than all the commands of his mother or of his teachers.

“ If this bias of Bruno’s had been taken advantage of—the violent repressed, and the gentle yielded to—I am convinced that he would have become a good and distinguished man. But his tutor, a person of rigid, unbending character, and still more his mother, seemed to have resolved only to make use of power in the subjection of his undisciplined will.

“ All this time Ma chère mère foreboded not how perilous was the course which Bruno was pursuing, and I myself knew nothing which I should have feared so much as her making the discovery—she, so proud, so sensitive on every point of honour, so rigid in her principles and her whole moral conduct! Bruno’s great beauty, his remarkable abilities and natural talents; his expertness in all bodily exercises, his courage, nay, even his overbearing strength, constituted her pride, and made her eyes sparkle with delight at his approach, or even at the very speaking of his name. To have heard anything dishonourable of him must have been a death-blow to her. Bruno, too, had pride and sense of honour, and the approbation of his mother was especially important to him; but his violent passions, and his inability to govern them, drew him perpetually into guilty conduct.

“ But now came a time in which I passed several summer months at Ramm, and in which, from what I saw of him, I hoped he had abandoned his evil courses. Bruno had been confirmed in the spring, and now appeared unusually mild and thoughtful. The connexion between him and his mother seemed more peaceful and affectionate than ever. I hoped that Bruno had turned back for ever from his errors. He himself said the same thing to me. But I could not help soon observing that he had his own private expenses, and those to an extent far greater than his own means ought to have allowed. For some time I had been in a condition to assist him with money, and had hoped by this means to restrain him, and prevent its application to improper purposes. He frequently requested money from me, and I furnished him with as much as was in my power; but one day he requested so large a sum as astonished me. I refused; in fact,

I could not do otherwise, and at the same time reproved him for this extravagance. Bruno was silent, but ground his teeth angrily, and left me. This was the last day we were to spend at home together. On the following we were both to set out, he for the University, and I for S——. That forenoon he went to the city to take leave of the old Dahls, and of his little bride, as he called Serena. He was not expected back till evening.

"Immediately after dinner the book-keeper announced with great agitation that a large sum of money, which that very morning he had placed in his desk, was gone, and that he must suspect the thief to be one of the household, as no one but those accustomed to the house knew where he was in the habit of keeping his money.

"It was the first time, as Ma chère mère believed, that such a circumstance had occurred in the house. She took up the affair with the greatest warmth, and immediately undertook a domiciliary search.

"Accompanied by the book-keeper and two of her oldest and most faithful servants, she went through the whole house, searched every corner, and examined all her domestics with the greatest severity; even the oldest servants were compelled to submit to the search. As nothing was discovered anywhere, not even the slightest trace which could lead to suspicion, Ma chère mère began to think that probably the informer himself might be the thief; and the possessions of the young book-keeper, and even the clothes which he wore, were subjected to a yet more severe scrutiny than those of the others had been.

"This young man was a personal enemy of Bruno; and whether he really suspected him, or whether he spoke in the bitterness which Ma chère mère's proceedings towards him awakened, I know not, but he said with bitter chagrin, 'Your ladyship may perhaps find nearer home that which you seek!'

"'What do you mean?' demanded she with an awful glance.

"'Yes,' replied the irritated man, 'that your ladyship may find with your own flesh and blood, that for which you have unjustly cast suspicions on innocent persons!'

"'Man, you lie!' exclaimed Ma chère mère, pale with rage, seizing him and shaking him by the arm.

“ ‘ I will be a liar,’ still more excited and almost furious, the other returned, ‘ if one of your own sons be not a thief ! ’

“ ‘ Follow me ! ’ said she ; and with flashing eyes and pale cheeks she betook herself, accompanied by the book-keeper and the two old servants, into our chamber.

“ I had been out, and had only just returned and been informed of that which had occurred, as Ma chère mère with her attendants entered. I cannot describe the sensation which I felt at that moment : a foreboding of the true fact passed through me ; I became pale, and involuntarily seated myself on Bruno’s travelling-chest, which stood by mine, ready packed for the journey. Ma chère mère looked at me with a penetrating glance, started, and became yet paler. After this she said, with a firm voice, to me and my brothers, who had also come into the room—

“ ‘ My sons ! For the honour of the house you must submit to the same search to which all the rest in the family have been subjected. I need not tell you that all this is merely *pro forma*, and that I am convinced of your innocence.’

“ With this she cast upon me a glance which was at that time inexplicable to me, and passing over my chest went and sought among my brother’s things. After this she returned to the room and opened my packed-up chest. Everything was turned out upon the floor. Nothing was found which had no right there ; and at the bottom of all they found my carpenter’s tools. When all had been examined, Ma chère mère cast upon me a glance full of maternal love and joy. Alas ! she had had suspicions of me—of the thoughtful man, rather than the wild youth ! now she raised her head, and one could read, in her strong expressive countenance, ‘ Thank God ! Now I am easy.’

“ ‘ Now then, there are only the things of the young Baron left,’ said one of the old servants respectfully, ‘ but the chest is locked ; and besides this, it is not necessary.’

“ ‘ That may be,’ exclaimed Ma chère mère, ‘ but he must fare like the rest. The box shall be broken open.’

“ ‘ But the young Baron—is not at home,’ said the servant anxiously ; ‘ we cannot——’

“ ‘ His mother commands it,’ said she, warmly.

“ It was done.

“ With her own hand the mother took out books

clothes, which had been thrown in in great disorder. Presently the hand was withdrawn, as if it had been burned by red-hot iron ; she had stumbled upon a bundle of notes. It was the missing money. She took it out ; turned it about in her hand ; examined it, as if she could not believe her own eyes ; grew paler and paler ; and then a cry of inexpressible anguish rose from her breast : ‘ My blood ! ’ exclaimed she, ‘ my own flesh and blood ! ’ and she sank without a sigh as if lifeless to the floor.

“ We carried her out ; and our exertions at length recalled her to consciousness. Terrible was her awaking. But she shed no tear, uttered no word of anger or complaint. She appeared strong and determined.

“ She sent immediately to Provost Rhen, the rector of the parish. He was a man of iron ; stern, strong, and one ready for law to combat with word or deed ; and more than this, he was an honest and faithful friend of Ma chère mère. To him she confided that which had occurred, and they two decided the steps which should be taken. I anticipated what was designed, and made use of the influence which I had sometimes with Ma chère mère, to induce her to resort to less severe, or, at least, less violent measures. But all my representations were useless. She merely answered, ‘ Unpunished crime brings more in time. Bitter must be atoned for by bitter.’

“ In the evening, about the time when Bruno was expected to return, myself, my three brothers, the old servants, and the book-keeper, were ordered into Ma chère mère’s apartment. It was only dimly lighted ; and there, in the gloomy dusky room, with Provost Rhen beside her, sat, in a tall arm-chair, Bruno’s mother ; upon whose countenance might be read the sorrow which she bore in her heart. But over sorrow, and shame, and anger, there prevailed stern determination such as I never before had seen in a human countenance.

“ Thus then was assembled that small but fearful court of judgment, before which Bruno was to be cited. Here we awaited him, a terrible hour. No one spoke. I saw, in that dull light, the drops of cold sweat, like beads, on the brow of that unhappy mother.

“ It was an evening at the end of September. Without, it

was already stormy, and a gusty wind shook the casements. One moment it was still, and in that moment we heard the fiery clatter of a horse's hoofs on the court pavement. I saw Ma chère mère tremble. I had never seen it before. I heard a dismal rattling—not of the casements—but of teeth, as they chatted together. My brothers wept. The old servants stood dumb, and with downcast glances: an expression of remorse was on the countenance of the book-keeper, and even the iron-souled Provost seemed gasping for breath.

“The door was quickly opened, and Bruno stepped in. I see him this moment, as if he stood before me. He was warm from riding, and from the storm; full of health and fire; I never saw him handsomer! He came to his mother, longing, as he always did, even after only a day’s absence, to throw himself into her arms. But already at the door he paused, started, and threw a terrified glance on his mother. She covered her face with her hands. Bruno grew pale, looked round upon us, and then again upon his mother. She cast a flashing glance upon him, and his countenance fell before it; he bowed his head, he became yet paler and paler, he stood there—a criminal!

“At that moment the voice of his mother was heard, awfully severe, accusing him of the theft; and pointing to his rifled chest and to the money which had been found in it, she demanded his confession.

“Bruno acknowledged himself guilty, with an inconceivably bold haughtiness.

“‘Fall upon your knees and receive your punishment!’ said the stern judge. But Bruno stood immovable. A consciousness which, after the first moment of his haughty confession, seemed to have deprived him of all volition overwhelmed him. He stood pale as death, his head dropped upon his breast, his eyes rivetted to the ground.

“Provost Rhen approached him. ‘Young man,’ said he, in a low voice, ‘you have grievously sinned against the commands of God, and against your mother. Acknowledge your guilt, and submit to your punishment!’

“Bruno stood there stupefied and silent. The Provost, taking his silence for consent, began to read, in a strong solemn voice, the customary questions of church penance. Bruno stood yet immovable; apparently without hearing or

seeing anything. But now inquired the Provost, with a severe tone, ‘Dost thou not know that by thy crime thou hast not only grievously offended against God, but hast occasioned scandal in His community?’

“These words seemed to rouse Bruno from his lethargy. He raised his head proudly; a fiery glance shot from his eyes, but he made no reply.

“Once more the question was repeated, and he yet remained silent.

“*Ma chère mère* raised herself. ‘Fall upon your knees, sinner!’ exclaimed she, in an awful voice.

“Bruno cast a dark and threatening glance upon her. So also looked she upon him. ‘I will not!’ at length said he in a tone of defiance. ‘What has this priest to do with me? I have not desired him. If he be here about confessions of guilt—others may come in question as well as I! Exasperate me not—or—’

“‘Silence!’ said *Ma chère mère*, gloomily, ‘and answer only to my question. Acknowledge you yourself to be alone guilty of this theft?’

“Bruno was silent, and cast a dark glance upon his mother.

“‘Answer!’ said she, hastily, ‘answer! Is there any partner with you in this guilt?’

“Bruno cast another long look on his mother; and then with a firm voice said, ‘No! I alone am guilty.’

“‘Bow down your knee, then, unhappy one!’ said she. ‘Your mother, whom you have covered with shame, commands you to endure the dishonour which you have deserved. Fall down!’

“Bruno stamped his foot in wild rage, clenched his fist, and darted a furious defying glance at her.

“‘Compel him down, force him down, you people!’ cried *Ma chère mère*, in terrible anger: ‘Priest, if thou art a man, bow the disobedient, degenerate son to the earth. Make him humble himself before the commands of the Lord.’

“I was about to step between them; but already had the Provost laid his strong hands on Bruno’s shoulders; in the same moment they were flung off again with a violence which whirled the Provost completely round.

“‘Layest thou hands on the servant of the Lord?’ exclaimed the Provost in a frenzy of rage, forgetting himself,

and seizing Bruno with a sinewy grasp. But Bruno had the strength and elasticity of the lion ; and, after a short struggle, the Provost lay stretched on the ground.

“ ‘Seize him ! hold him !’ exclaimed Ma chère mère, beside herself for anger.

“ The book-keeper and my brother, who attempted to hold him, soon lay by the Provost ; and then Bruno, starting back a few paces, seized a staff which stood in a corner of the room, and swinging it over his head, made it resound, and with the expression of mad frenzy on his countenance menaced each and all who should dare to approach him.

“ No one dared to do so—except his mother. ‘Remain where you are,’ said she to the others ; and then, with firm steps and quiet mien, she approached him, laid her hand upon his head, bowed him down before her, and asked in a voice which made the blood freeze in my veins, whether he would submit himself to her will, or—receive her curse ?

“ Mother and son looked at each other with eyes of flame and defiance. For a long time they stood thus. Again she repeated the question ; and then followed terrible words on both sides. Again all was still. The curse-speaking lips became stiff, the haughty glances dimmed. Mother and son both sank in a deep swoon.

“ Both were carried to their separate chambers——”

Bear paused here. “ Oh, horrible ! horrible !” exclaimed I, shuddering, and laid my head upon his shoulder.

Bear was pale and silent for a moment, during which his eyes were fixed. Then continued he : “ They returned to consciousness, but did not see each other again that evening. I sought to speak with him ; but he affected to be sleeping, and I at length returned to my chamber.

“ In the night, when all was dark and still, we heard suddenly a wild, prolonged, and thrilling cry from his room. I sprang up and hastened there. Bruno’s mother was standing there alone, with a wild and agitated look. Bruno was gone ! The open window seemed to indicate that he had made his escape that way, although a descent from a height like that appeared almost incredible. Yet it was so. Bruno fled that night from his mother’s roof, and never returned. We never heard tidings of him. All inquiries were vain—Bruno was gone, as if cut out from the number of the living. Seventeen

years have passed since this unhappy time, and we have discovered not the least trace of his life. We therefore believe his death probable.

"In his flight Bruno took not the least thing with him, excepting the clothes he wore and some papers. On his table lay a sheet of paper whereon were the following words, addressed to me, and written in evident haste :

" 'I have met severity with scorn, might with might ; and this has made me appear more criminal than I truly am. But before you, brother, who have never been severe or unreasonable towards me—before you who, as I believe, love me —will I not appear worse than I am. Hear me then—for this is the last time—this last theft (and I had sworn that it should be the last) was not entirely a theft. The day after to-morrow the money would have been restored. If you will convince yourself of this, speak with Mr. E. in W. The money was not for myself, but for the unfort—— ; but what does it signify ? My mother refused me a loan—and now I took only of that which at one time would be mine—it was discovered, and she—she must bear the consequences of that which has happened and may yet happen.

' Farewell for ever,

' BRUNO.'

" Ma chère mère tore the paper out of my hand, and read the contents. ' He has stolen more than once, then,' said she passionately. ' I have then brought a thief into the world ! ' She tore the letter into a thousand pieces.

" From this moment she spoke not one word for three years. She shut herself in her own room, which was darkened ; would endure neither light nor the sight of man ; ate and drank but little ; slept scarcely at all ; spoke with none ; and no one, with the exception of Elsa, ventured to speak with her. When any of us against her commands were bold enough to approach her, she either fell into violent rage and showed the intruder out, or sate immovable, with her hands before her face, obstinately silent, and deaf to all our entreaties.

" Lagman Hök, in the mean time, in association with Provost Rhen, managed her affairs. In the hands of these honourable men they were safe. A skilful overseer, acquainted with the place, farmed the estate under their inspection.

But as Ma chère mère's hypochondriacal condition had already continued so long, and threatened a still longer continuance, I determined, after counselling with these friends, to call her own family together, and in conjunction with them to consider and determine what was best to be done both for the present and the future.

" This family meeting took place at Ramm, in October, 18—, three years after Bruno's flight. One day, as we sate together in the great hall, busily occupied by our council, the door was suddenly opened, and Ma chère mère entered; lofty, quiet, collected, and more respect-inspiring than ever. She addressed the assembly in her customary strong, solemn manner; said that she knew the object of their meeting; justified it on account of her long sickness; but declared the Congress to be now dissolved, because she felt herself again in perfect health, and again in a condition to regulate, as before, her family and her property. She returned thanks to all her friends with an earnestness that affected all, for their assistance and for the patience which they had shown towards her, whom the Lord had so severely smitten. Next, she bade her relations all kindly welcome, prayed them to remain yet longer, and to be as cheerful and happy at Ramm as formerly.

" It is difficult to describe the effect which this scene produced upon the assembly. Admiration, esteem, and sympathy were the feelings of most: for myself, I felt sincere joy, for I really loved Ma chère mère.

" To gratify her wishes, the family remained there a few days. But all gaiety had vanished from Ramm, and Ma chère mère, though strong and domineering as ever, went about like the shadow of what she had formerly been. Her complexion was changed; her hair become perfectly grey; her handsome, hitherto so animated countenance bore traces of the most painful sufferings; and she, who formerly was so cheerful, had become gloomy and thoughtful. She now wore always a dark grey dress, and rejected all ornaments. At intervals too she had attacks of deep melancholy, and would sit silent for hours, her face covered with her hands.

" The first use which Ma chère mère made of her re-established self-government, was to remove from Ramm to Carlsfors. Shortly thereafter she sold the first-mentioned estate;

she seemed to regard Bruno as dead, never named him, and could bear nothing which reminded her of him. The old servants were dismissed with pensions; she formed an entirely new household. Elsa alone remained of all her former domestics.

"Time passed on, and by degrees the dark melancholy seemed to leave her, and now for the last several years Ma chère mère appears to have resumed her former life-enjoying existence. Only one must carefully avoid touching the wounded heart, which never can be perfectly healed in this world.

"Bruno's flight made a great noise in the country, but Ma chère mère was so honoured and beloved by her domestics, that the disgraceful occasion of his flight was never known publicly. Many uncertain reports were soon spread, but people all adopted the opinion that incompatibility of temper in mother and son had been the one sole cause of this violent separation. And in fact it was so.

"Another mode of treatment, from childhood upward, would probably have made Bruno's fate different to what it was. But now—unfortunate Bruno!—I must always lament and pity him." So concluded Bear, with a tear and a deep sigh.

This history saddened indeed my spirit, but I confess that it has given Ma chère mère a much higher interest in my eyes. I perceive now, in the depths of her being, the wounded and bleeding heart of a mother; and her misfortune was greater than her fault. I felt myself nearer to her; and it seems to me as if I loved her better.

22nd.

I wish now to send off this packet of letters, yet I must just say before it goes that I am here now as a mock widow. Bear has taken a journey with Peter to G—, to arrange some money matters. Bear, during his twenty years' practice, has saved a pretty little property; which, by Peter's advice, he is now gone to invest in the great trading-house of L—. During this time, therefore, I rule and reign in solitary state over Rosenvik, the cabriolet and the horse. Bear desired me frequently to use these latter in conveying me to Carlsfors; and Peter besought me in a very friendly manner to look after his little Ebba. I shall fulfil their

wishes ; although I would just now much rather remain at home, in my own beloved home, and see my peas in blossom.

At the end of next week we are to receive a visitor at Rosenvik, the prospect of which makes me a little anxious. It is the young Baron Stellan S., son of the late Marschall of the Court, S., who was an intimate friend of Bear's youth. Bear is this young man's guardian, and is attached to him not only on his father's account, but on his own also. This young Stellan S. is gentleman of the bedchamber ; handsome, rich, and full of talent. All this is not so very terrible, certainly ; still, from much that I have heard of his elegance, his toilet, his style, I am not quite easy about entertaining so fine a gentleman in my small and but modestly supplied house. I cannot see, for my part, how he is to be amused ; and yet I wish most sincerely that every friend of my husband should find his house agreeable.

But all can go on as it may, only how will it go on with my romance ? I find no intrigues, no entanglements, consequently no disentanglements ; I get only new persons. How am I to unravel all these ? how keep the threads together without a perfect jumble ? And now again two new characters ;—the brilliant Stellan S. and the mysterious Romilly ; it makes me quite out of breath, how will it fare with my romance ?

But let it turn out as it may, I remain your

FRANSISKA.

A STRANGE LADY TO THE READER.

I hope, worthy Reader, that this will reach thee in good health and good humour. I hope, such being the case, that thou wilt excuse it if now and then the letter of a gentleman should slip in among those of a young married lady, and that thou will not take it altogether amiss if an unmarried lady occasionally should take up her pen in order to converse with thee. All this is merely that thou mayest have less trouble ; and, in fact, I do not otherwise know how thou, dear Reader, and the young wife, would ever be able to unravel all this about the Neighbours.

I remain, my Reader,
With the greatest esteem for thee,
A STRANGE LADY.

BRUNO MANSFELT TO ANTONIO DE R.—.

Ramm, Midsummer evening, 18—

Here I am again ; here where I was born, where I played and loved, as a boy and as a youth. Between then and now lies a sea, a sea full of—but nevertheless I am once more here. The oaks are as green as ever ; the mountain peak is as high, the clouds pass over as they did hitherto. Feelings, thoughts, actions, are also clouds :—they come, they go—space swallows them up—swallows ?—No, something of them remains behind. I feel that too well !

I have ascended to the summit of the mountain, and stood where I stood as a boy ; where I stood with panting breast and saw the sea-waves lashed into foam by the winds, and the blue mountains raise themselves from the opposite shore, and whence my forebodings, my aspirings and my longings, fled forth far beyond. I stood by the self-same fir-tree—it had now outgrown me, although its roots strike into the rock. A heap of stones lay beneath. I was acquainted with it. The boy had built a pyramid upon the mountain-top, and had planted there his banner of freedom. The pyramid was thrown down, but the man stood there now, and thought of the work of the boy and smiled—a bitter smile. I have wandered about in the wood—in the fields and on the sea-shore ; I have sought out many particular places, and woke many remembrances. The stormy appears to me calm, the guilty innocent. You may imagine how this is. I have lived my spring-time over again ; I have enjoyed, I have wept—it was delight !

Now it is evening, and all around me is still. I also have a moment's rest, like the ash-leaf which lately blown by the wind struck lightly on the casement ; like the falcon which lately flew circling over the meadow. The mist now lies white and transparent over the green earth, and over reposing human beings. I hear the monotonous song of the moor-larks, than which I know nothing sweeter. By this song I slept every summer evening, with my face turned towards heaven, which was then rosy as now, and saw the clouds become more golden and more bright, the deeper the sun sunk—as it is with the actions of a noble life when this is sunk in the deep. Oh !—

And then as my eyes closed themselves, and pictures of life began to float in dreams, then ever drew near—then every, every evening came some one to my bed, and kind hands drew around shoulders and breast the covering which I had negligently thrown off;—a warm caressing breath then passed over my cheeks. I knew well who was near me, it was—my mother! O how every fibre of my soul thrills and palpitates at this adored yet terrible name—my mother! She was a handsome and noble lady. I was proud to name myself her son. Sometimes I have suddenly thrown off the covering which she had so carefully laid over me, and with one spring fallen on her breast, embraced and kissed her as I never kissed any beloved one. And she clasped me in her arms—that—that was love! Sometimes, too, I lay still, pretending to sleep, and then I have seen her fall on her knees by my couch. She prayed—prayed for me! How have those prayers been answered!

I have had the apartments here repaired and furnished. I did not wish that the place should too closely resemble what it was. I feared lest the apparition of a child in the white dress of innocence should present itself to me. The sleeping-room of my mother only I have left unchanged. I have not been into it. I could not. It is kept locked.

After this, will you acknowledge me again? Will you not lament over me as having become weak and pusillanimous? Hear me! I am rejoiced to feel myself again human. I am glad that no death-in-life quiet has petrified my heart. Still, as long as I live no sentiment shall weaken or depress me, even though it came from the abyss; no joy and no pain!

I know only too well that I never can be happy; peace is not for me: I can never forget; nevertheless—I can bear. But I will bear alone that which I alone have merited. Many a tone can life wake in my breast, but never that of complaint. I defy both the world and suffering!—Beyond this, too, man can always cease to be, when he finds that miserable jugglery called “life” too heavy for him. Sometimes I think “perhaps it will mend—perhaps the yet bright day may efface the shadows of the past; perhaps the storm may be hushed, and these lamenting and mourning voices die away! Time, rural occupation, custom, and perhaps domestic

happiness——” You smile, Antonio. I smile also at such childish dreams. It may be ; but at all events, like a watcher, I look out for something—perhaps, after all, only for a dream.

Did you ever hear of a man who sought after his shadow ? He had lost it, and it never prospered with him afterwards in this world. I am that man ! I seek my lost shadow. I seek after esteem ; after a consideration in that place where I at first violated the law. I will win the civic wreath there, and will atone by beneficence for early misdeeds. Can it be ? In the eye of the world, yes ! but with the judge in one’s own breast ? One thing, however, I will obtain, for without the obtaining of that everything else is nothing. Should this be refused to me, I will once more leave the land of my childhood, go once more into the wide world and be—cursed ! Why was Cain’s brow stamped by Heaven with eternal unrest ? *He was cursed by his mother !* I know how Cain felt. I also was cursed by my mother, and am without rest in the world. And now, I desire, I will, that upon that brow whereon she laid so heavy a curse, she will again lay her hand, remove the curse, and place a blessing in its stead ! Oh, then will its burning fire be cooled. Shall I bend my head to that breast which first gave me nourishment ? Shall I see forgiveness in that stern glance ? Shall I yet once more press those lips in love which once cursed me ? Oh, I thirst, I burn, I languish after this happiness !

Do you know a high, holy, sweet, fearful name—a name which breaks forth in the struggle between life and death ; a name which God himself, loving and suffering as a man, pronounced ? This name I will address in my soul to her who has cast me off. Mother ! oh, mother !

Mother, my mother ! wilt thou acknowledge thy guilty son—wilt thou forgive him ? I scarcely dare to hope it. Yet she should do it. Great was her guilt. Severity against severity, bitterness against bitterness—it could not succeed ! But would she only be affectionate—would she only forgive ! I would pour out prayers at her feet !

You know my passion for music. I can satisfy it here. I have had an organ placed in one of the rooms ; its tone is good. Every evening, at the approach of twilight, I sit and play there till deep in the night ; the deeper the stillness,

the dimmer the twilight, the higher peals forth the organ. It quietens me. It exalts and refreshes my soul. In its flood of sound I drown the recollections which become living in the bosom of night. Music is a glorious thing! It is an intoxication, an enchantment; a world in which to live, to combat, to repose—a sea of painful delight, incomprehensible and boundless as eternity.

In such moments a vision sometimes presents itself. It appears to me as if there arose out of this tempestuous world, above this sea of sound, a—what must I call it?—a hope, a beauty, a heavenly spirit, a kind reconciling genius, which, extracting from this stream of sound all that is most beautiful and most ethereal, weaves therefrom its own pure essence. The deeper the fugue descends, the brighter becomes this image, like stars in the dark night. Then sinks the storm, and my soul becomes tranquil: all dissonance, all pain is gone, and the heavenly image floats radiantly over the quiet lake. But then it also dims and vanishes. I cannot keep it. It arises with the ascending of the sound, and fades with its decline. Neither can I call up at will this heavenly phantasma, although I have an indescribable longing to behold it. A reality so beautiful as this vision, life has never presented me with. I seldom go to rest before the first sunbeams dance in the Helga sea. Then my spirit is wearied with the warfare and enchantment of the night. Then I can rest several hours.

Would that the song of my heart, the *miserère* of my soul, could once reach the ear of my mother! But before she hears my voice messengers shall approach, who, in friendly melodies, shall speak to her of the stranger. She shall hear him praised and celebrated, and then she will the less shrink back from acknowledging in him her son.

But——should she not do so—then Antonio, you will soon again see at the Rouge et Noir

YOUR FRIEND.

CHAPTER V.

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.—.

Rosenvik, 25th June, Evening.

Ha! a stormy day, a truly unfortunate day! The beginning however was good. Yesterday I was invited to dinner, and to a Midsummer dance, at Carlsfors; but my headache prevented my going there. I let my servants go to the dance, excepting Sissa, who could be induced on no conditions to leave me, and I myself passed the lively Midsummer-day on the sofa. That was not very agreeable, yet it did me good to think on the many who were joyful on this day.

To-day I am full of health, and overflowing life. I felt an inclination for a long walk, and took my work-basket and set off for Carlsfors. The weather was rather dull, but still and pleasant. The country was full of its summer glory; the scythe had not yet gone over the flowery grass. Butterflies flitted past with glittering wings; the birds sang, and I sang too; sang as I walked over the beautiful earth, and felt myself happy to be one of those little beings which, inspired by a light and thankful breast, lift up their voices in praise of the Creator. To take such a walk as this, alone, without companions, is one of the greatest pleasures I know. I am always on such occasions as light and careless as a bird; I forget all the weariness of the world in the presence of air, flowers, green trees, blue waters; the whole life of nature becomes my life.

When I arrived at Carlsfors, I found Ma chère mère busy at her lathe. She seemed delighted to see me, embraced me cordially, scolded me about my "stupid headache," and very soon we were in the midst of a lively and jocose conversation; during which time she went on with her work, and I admired her dexterity. It gives me real delight to feel that Ma chère mère and I become still more intimate. There is a something between us that accords. I like her, and always feel cheerful and unconstrained with her. She is a prudent, true-hearted woman, even if she be stern; and belongs to that rare class of character who always know what they are aiming at. Such persons have a beneficial influence on

me. My quicksilver nature is calmed down and regulated by theirs. Two or three times during our conversation, she spoke to me with the pronoun *thou*,* which in her mouth has a something particularly graceful and sincere. Generally she uses *you* to all ladies, and Jane Marie she calls "my daughter-in-law." The little word *thou* addressed to me gave me great pleasure, as did also the present of a handsome turned box, which she had completed under my eyes.

Would it be possible for two people to be talking together in this neighbourhood without their mentioning the new resident at Ramm? I believe it would be impossible. Ma chère mère also spoke of him to-day. This extraordinary man, it seems, has consecrated his residence in this country by a large donation for the erection of a school, which has long been wanted here. The old estimable Mr. Dahl, who, notwithstanding his great age, is so active, and the Provost D., in W., have undertaken the management of this business. Ma chère mère spoke of it; and it seemed to me that she also intended to take her part in this new institution, as well by providing the oak timber necessary for the building, as by her good counsel also. A few words which she said on this occasion respecting education and general enlightenment, pleased me on account of the clear and sound views which they contained.

Thus were we two in the sunshine together, but towards noon clouds began to gather.

In her behaviour to me, Jane Marie was as usual most friendly and agreeable; but towards Ebba she assumed a chiding, admonitory, governess tone, which became her as little as it did good to Ebba. As for Ebba, whatever might be amiss with her, she was in so bad a humour that not even a lover could have given it a better name. Negligent in dress and deportment, she leaned herself back, in a wayward mood, in her chair, would eat nothing, made faces, threw her knife and fork away, grumbled right and left, and behaved most unbecomingly. Jane Marie blamed and moralized in vain. Ma chère mère said nothing, but I saw by certain glances that a storm was not far off. I was anxious, as I always am when I apprehend domestic strife, and did all that

* A mode of speech used amongst equals only, as a demonstration of great affection and familiarity.

lay in my power to disperse that which threatened. But there was something strange in Jane Marie. It seemed as if she rather wished to unveil than to conceal Ebba's faults. Ebba began to sing to herself.

"People don't sing at table, Ebba," said Jane Marie, louder than there was any occasion for.

Ma chère mère seemed to wish, as I did, to disperse the storm. She talked therefore with Ebba in a very friendly and joking tone. But Ebba was silent, and looked scornfully at her.

"Ebba, it is unseemly to look at Ma chère mère in that way," said the carping voice of Jane Marie.

"Yet a cat may look at a king," remarked Ma chère mère good-humouredly: then added, but more seriously, that she thought she had a reasonable lady at table, and not a child, etc. Ebba began again to hum a ballad.

"Don't sing, Ebba," said Jane Marie; "but listen to what Ma chère mère says."

"I don't know why I should do so," replied Ebba, with matchless effrontery.

"Because it is your duty," thundered out Ma chère mère, striking the table with her clenched fist; "and if you do not know this already, I'll be hanged if I won't teach it to you!" She rose, her nose was sharp and pale, her breath was hissing. The storm after this might have passed over, had not Ebba's incivility exceeded all bounds. I have often remarked that in small things Jane Marie wishes to have the preference over Ebba or me. She will enter a room first, be first bid to table, and so on. Once I heard her say to the servant, "Remember that you must always present me before the Baroness Ebba." I willingly let this pass unnoticed; but Ebba took every opportunity to oppose Jane Marie's assumed claim of priority. A plate of milk which now unfortunately stood between the two sisters-in-law was the occasion of strife. Jane Marie, with a very haughty air, endeavoured to appropriate this to herself, when Ebba snatched it with such violence that the milk was spilled over Jane Marie's muslin dress. All was now lost! Jane Marie called for help; Ma chère mère pushed back her chair, and without saying a word to Ebba, took her by the arm and led her out of the dining-room. I was crimson with shame at

this scene, and wished myself away. We all arose; Jane Marie went to change her dress, and we assembled in the drawing-room, into which Ma chère mère also soon came, leading in Ebba, whose face was scarlet, and who with difficulty kept back her sobs. She led her to Jane Marie and pronounced an apology, which Ebba repeated word for word after her; whereupon the two sisters-in-law embraced, but without cordiality. All this over, Ebba rushed to another room, threw herself on a sofa, and cried herself to sleep.

After coffee, Ma chère mère made the proposal to Jane Marie that she should play an overture, and then that they two should play a piece together. Jane Marie, who has no great opinion of Ma chère mère's musical talents, glanced at me with a half-sarcastic expression, and then, in compliance with the request, played a sonata of Mozart, which Ma chère mère selected, and in which she accompanied her on her violin with ability certainly, but with no particular grace. I was charmed, however, as I always am, by the music of Mozart. Jane Marie will not willingly play any music but that of Herz or Czerny, which to my taste is too fantastic and affected. Jane Marie's superior talent, Ma chère mère's zeal, and her being so practised in "her Mozart," as she calls him, occasioned this piece to go off so well that Ma chère mère herself cried "Bravo!"

After Jane Marie it came to my turn; but partly in consequence of the "grande sonate par Steibelt avec accompagnement de violon" being wholly unknown to me, and partly in consequence of my being but a bungler on the piano in comparison of Jane Marie, I performed only indifferently. In vain did Ma chère mère beat the time, in vain made such flourishes on the violin that my tympanum was nearly rent to pieces, we were still both of us always out of time. We began again, we repeated; she was impatient, and I was impatient, and we wound up with a perfect charivari. Ma chère mère laid down her violin, and called me "a little bête."

"When Jane Marie and I go together," added she, "it is very different. One can call that harmony."

The harmony, however, between Ma chère mère and Jane Marie was soon disturbed. They got upon a question of housewifery. Ma chère mère uses one-and-a-half measur^e

of malt; to two measures of beer and to half a measure of ale Jane Marie asserted that one-third less malt, according to her method, would brew the same quantity of good beer and ale.

Ma chère mère said this was purely impossible, but Jane Marie abode by her assertion, and thus the strife lasted a long time; till at last Jane Marie let fall the remark that Ma chère mère did not understand the right art of brewing. This was unlucky.

"Will the egg be wiser than the hen?" asked Ma chère mère with bitterness. "I do not trouble myself about your new-fashioned art of brewing and your wonderful discoveries. There may be art in them, but there is all the less wort. They who have tried know; and I have seen a few more years and a few more brewings than you have, daughter-in-law Jane Marie. The old woman is the oldest, remember that!"

Jane Marie worked busily at the embroidery, grew very red, but was silent, with a countenance of superior wisdom. All this was not pleasant. In the mean time Ebba awoke, and came into the room like a bird after a shower. In order to amuse her, I proposed some cheerful game at cards. Ma chère mère assented gladly, and we sate ourselves all down to a round table. But in the very beginning of the game, Jane Marie and Ebba fell into strife about some rule of the game, and that right vehemently. Ebba appealed to me, and I gave my decision in her favour, with a merry remark on Jane Marie's opinion. This offended her; and in return she gave me a biting reply. Heaven knows how it was that my thermometer rose in a moment! I was hot to the ears, answered somewhat tartly, and for some moments we two quarrelled sharply. As soon, however, as I saw Ma chère mère's large eyes fixed upon me, I was ashamed, blushed, and endeavoured to make amends for my over-hastiness. But never surely was a game so little cheerful! Jane Marie sate there as if in a church, and received all Ma chère mère's observations, whether coarse or fine, with icy coldness.

I was truly rejoiced when they came to say that the cabriolet was at the door. As I took leave of Jane Marie, she withdrew from the kiss which I wished to press warmly on her lips, and only coldly and scarcely perceptibly touched

my hand with the tips of her fingers. I was sorry to see how angry she was with me. Ma chère mère accompanied me to the hall, and said, "My dear Fransiska, we have all been very wearisome to-day."

"Ah, yes!" answered I, so truly from the depths of my heart that Ma chère mère was obliged to laugh, embraced me, and looking keenly at me said, "Yes; and you have been no better than the rest, you child."

"Nor you, mother, either," said I merrily; but somewhat shocked at my boldness, I added warmly, "Forgive me!" and kissed her hand.

"Now come again to-morrow," said she laughing, and giving me a little slap on the cheek, "and we will try if we cannot do better. Will you? Come, my child. I will send the Norrköpings' carriage to fetch you and take you back. The horses need a little exercise."

This little parting scene lightened my heart. Ma chère mère possesses a stronger charm for me daily. But Jane Marie! How speeds it with our friendship and *La Commedia Divina*? But I will condemn no one for this day. There are bad days, which put all tempers out of tune, just as the milk becomes sour in the dairy when there is thunder in the air; and I myself was, as Ma chère mère says, no better than the rest.

To-morrow I hope all will be straight between Jane Marie and me.

26th, Evening.

No! all is not straight again between Jane Marie and me. Extraordinary how any one on account of a trifle can nourish resentment, more especially when the warmth was mutual.

Ma chère mère met me yesterday more cordially than common. Jane Marie, on the contrary, was constrained and unfriendly; she would not converse with me, and when I spoke to her scarcely answered me. That distressed me to the heart. I was also grieved for Ebba. She was pale and depressed, but not in ill-humour, and appeared as if she hardly understood either herself or life. She looked as if she needed a friend, and I determined to become such to her according to my best ability. I remarked also that Jane Marie's moral lectures did no good; and that her and Jean Jacques' eternal exhortation to her, "to be rational, and go

out and walk," only fixed the determination the more firmly in her wilful brain never to set foot out of doors, and to be as little rational as possible.

I took the opportunity during a moment when we were alone to say to Ebba, "Have you any desire to come tomorrow morning quite early to our house to drink new milk? I have a cow, by name Audumbla, that gives the most delicious milk in the world; and beyond that, is so tame that she will take bread out of your hand if you will feed her. Have you any desire?"

"Ah, yes!" said Ebba, surprised, and opening wide her beautiful eyes, which instantly became brilliant.

"Now I shall come and fetch you," said I, "early tomorrow morning. But can you be up by six?"

"At five, or four," returned she, with enthusiasm.

"But you cannot walk so far," rejoined I; "it is nearly a mile and a half from Rosenvik—no, it is too far!"

"No, no, certainly not!" persisted she; "I can very well walk six miles or more. I am strong. I can dance a whole night."

"Then I shall come and fetch you at six o'clock," I said, "and keep you with me the whole day. We will bake pancakes for ourselves for dinner, and in the evening I will bring you back in the cabriolet. The horse is so quiet that I am convinced that you may drive him yourself."

"Heavens! how charming it will be!" exclaimed Ebba, quite enraptured.

"But," said I, "we must first have Ma chère mère's permission."

"Of course; I will run to her immediately and speak about it;" and away she ran. The dislike to the country, the resolve never to go out, all were forgotten in the prospect of going with me, drinking milk, and driving the horse.

I rejoiced over my conquest, and that I should have Ebba for a whole day with me; for I felt persuaded that she possessed a good heart and understanding, if the right means were only used to call them forth. A few moments after this, I went to Ma chère mère's room, and found her with Ebba seated on her knee, chattering to her with all the merry freedom of a child, the while she was twisting the worthy old lady's cap into all odd bends and shapes. Ma chère mère

laughed, and granted her request. There exists the very best understanding between them.

"So, my dear Fransiska," said Ma chère mère kindly, "I hear that to-morrow morning you will convey Ebba away, in order that she may drink sweet milk with your calves. I presume that you convey her away in an air balloon, because you know that she cannot walk on dusty roads or green grass."

"How cheerful that would be!" exclaimed Ebba, clapping her hands, and hopping out of the room.

"She is not bad," observed Ma chère mère, "but she is an ill-trained child, and must yet be better taught. If it had been done earlier, it would have spared after-trouble. Fransiska, if you have children, remember the words of the son of Sirach—'if you have children, chastise them.' "

I suggested that one should merely work by reason on children, and thus train them to be good men and thinking beings.

"Many ways may lead to Rome," returned she, "but the way of the rod leads them much sooner than the way of reason. Of course you must operate on men by reason. But to be reasoning with children is to talk yourself hoarse, and get nothing for it. Teach the wolf the paternoster, and he still will be craving for the lamb. My brother-in-law Reinhold's children were to be brought up on this reasoning system, and were to turn out something magnificent. Nay! it was too horrible! The whole brood was the plague of everybody in the house. One day there were visitors at my brother-in-law's, and the children went about making havoc like little demons. Some one of the company remarked that something was 'black as a raven,' whereupon one of the young Reinholsds cried out, 'the raven is white.' 'No, my young one,' said the mother, 'the raven is black.' 'Nay!' screamed the boy angrily, 'the raven is white, the raven is white!' 'The raven is black,' said the mother. 'The raven is white?' cried the boy. Now what should one do? Could one have had a raven directly at hand to convince his reason? No, and so that young one would have the last word. I should like to have had him under my hands, and then he should soon have learned, and that with emphasis, that a raven is *not* white. No, no, Fransiska; reason is a good

thing, but it does no good with children. Those who will not obey father and mother, will yet obey the rod."

The story and Ma chère mère's zeal made me laugh heartily ; but the thought how unfortunate Ma chère mère's doctrine had proved with regard to her only son, inspired a feeling of sadness ; and full of my own thoughts, I said, " It is possible that for different dispositions different modes of treatment are requisite."

" Perhaps so," said Ma chère mère, and a dark cloud rested on her brow ; but she soon dispersed it, and gaily resumed the conversation.

" In the mean time, Fransiska," said she, " I am glad that thou hast taken that pretty little romp, Ebba, a little under thy care. At her age discreet words are seldom wasted : ' that which is hidden in the snow turns up in the thaw.' "

The pretty romp was good-humoured and amiable all the day. Jane Marie, on the contrary, only the more sullen ; at least, towards Ebba and me. It seemed as if she thought we had made a league against her. I had a great desire to show her that it was not so, and that there was nothing I wished for more than that there should be again a good feeling between us ; but she exhibited a trait of character which almost displaced her from my heart, because it betrayed a want of goodness and true education. It was towards evening, and we were speaking of Bellini, with whose ballads Ebba was charmed. Jane Marie said he was too uniform, and that there was no life in his melodies.

" O," cried Ebba, " I must sing you one of his pieces, which is angelic, and which I learned last winter from Mr. B. You must hear it!"

She sprang to the piano, and sang with much grace a charming little piece of this melodious master. I listened with great pleasure ; when, exactly at the moment in which she executed with observant care a most expressive morendo, Jane Marie pushed back her chair with great noise and went out of the room, both opening and shutting the door violently. Ebba turned red, and so did I, because Jane Marie's behaviour was painful, and was evidently intended to set Ebba down. I saw by a glance that Ma chère mère felt it as I did ; and when Ebba left off, with tears in her eyes, she praised her

greatly ; more indeed than she would have done if Jane Marie had not shown such great unfriendliness.

Jane Marie is always praised as a lady of such superior education. "Ah," thought I, reviewing this scene, "how superficially is this beautiful and much-expressing phrase applied!" and I felt after this no longer any great desire to seek too much after a reconciliation with Jane Marie. I will let it come when it will.

But oh ! what comes now to me with joy and rapture ? A letter from you, my Maria, so beautiful, so full of that which makes me happy ! Although it is already late, I yet cannot go to rest till I have somewhat unburdened myself of the feelings and the words which you have called up in my heart ! *

27th, Evening.

This morning at five o'clock I set out on the way to Carlsfors to fetch Ebba. The weather was as fine as I could wish. At six o'clock I found Ebba at the appointed place, ready dressed, full of enthusiasm, and impatiently awaiting me. With the exception of the domestics, nobody was up but she, and so we set out. At first she talked, leaped, laughed, and sang, rejoicing in her life, like a bird ; but when we had reached a large, beautiful, and thick wood, which lies about midway between Carlsfors and Rosenvik, then she became suddenly quiet. It was, in fact, a situation calculated to excite pleasant and serious thought at the same time. It was perfectly still ; large dewdrops hung on the leaves of the trees, and with golden rays broke the sun through the wood, producing amid the rich foliage innumerable beautiful effects of light and shade. The air was indescribably pure and delicious. Ebba involuntarily went slower and slower, and I walked silently beside her. A solemn mood was over me. I threw now and then a glance at Ebba. A soft paleness overspread her beautiful young face ; a certain new perception might be read there ; large tears were in her eyes, which

* This outpouring of feeling does not appear here. The liberty has been taken of excluding from these letters of a young wife that which was only intended for Maria, and the reader's pardon is not besought on that account. For the most part, the winding-up of the letters has been omitted, which of all endings would have appeared to us to be the most tedious and the least instructive.

looked slowly around as if full of astonishment—they beheld a new world!

At that moment a bird struck up wonderful, enchanting notes. One might have said that he was animated by a thinking soul.

"Oh! what is that?" asked Ebba, astonished, and standing still.

"It is a nightingale," I replied, rejoicing no little in the beloved, but so rarely-heard song.

Ebba listened long, looked long, as if listening to everything around her. It seemed as if her spiritual ear had now, for the first time, awoke to the high song of life.

"Gracious Heaven!" whispered she, "how solemn it is, how wonderful, how beautiful!"

I repeated half aloud the words of Tegnér—

Ah ! if so much of beauty pour itself
Into each vein of life, and of creation,
How beautiful must the great Fountain be,
The bright, the Eternal !

Ebba threw herself weeping into my arms, and I clasped her to me with sisterly affection.

"Ah, Fransiska," said she, "I know not how I feel. I am happy, and yet I must weep ! It is so beautiful, so great, so wonderful around me. Tell me, what is this like?"

"Life," I replied.

"Life?" repeated she, astonished; "but life has such various, such unaccordant scenes."

"Yes," said I, "but that which we see at this moment resembles the truth of life; the inward reality of life—which is serious, yet at the same time joyful."

Ebba laid her hand on her forehead. "I do not perfectly understand you," said she; "but I think I half guess. Thoughts pass through my mind, but I cannot arrange them."

"In time, my dear Ebba," I replied, "you will understand them better."

"And if I understood that seriousness of life," said she, "of which you speak, should I then be joyful, and laugh as now?"

"O yes!" I answered; "then, for the first time, Ebba,

would you be truly joyful and happy ; then you would not, as now, have so much ill-humour and so many weary moments."

" I will learn the seriousness of life," said she, cheerfully. " But then, who will teach me ? Jane Marie cannot do it. You could, but then I shall so soon leave you."

" Do you know, Ebba," asked I, " whom this wood-scene also resembles ?"

" Whom ?"

" Your husband," I replied.

Ebba looked at me with sparkling eyes. " I believe you are right," she said.

" Yes," I said, " his spirit is both serious and bright. And if you will learn the seriousness of life, and its beauty also, live for him, Ebba. O Ebba ! be like the nightingale to his domestic life ; be to him like the sunbeams between these trees ; unite yourself inwardly to him ; be guided by him ; make him happy ; and then you will understand that which is the best happiness of life, and will acquire a worth in your own eyes, with God and with man."

Ebba was pale, kissed my hand, and wept.

But, ah ! how lovely were those tears upon the young cheek. They announced the morning-dawn of womanhood in a hitherto childish being !

I left Ebba to her own thoughts, and we went on our way silently towards Rosenvik. It was only when we arrived there that she aroused herself from her quiet reflections ; and then the foaming milk, which we took in glasses out of the milk-pail, seemed to us a drink worthy of the gods. Ebba could not conceive that Audumbla's could be like common milk, and I did not entirely undeceive her.

My intercourse with Ebba during the remainder of the day strengthened my opinion of her. Many good natural qualities lie hidden, which, if properly developed and cultivated, would make her a good and estimable being. There is, it is true, much in her that is childish, but I have every reason to pardon that in her seventeenth year, which I at seven-and-twenty—

Ebba at one time fell into deep and, as it seemed to me, sorrowful thought. I asked her tenderly what pressed upon her mind so much.

"Oh," sighed Ebba deeply, "if he only were not called Peter!"

I could not help laughing aloud at this trouble. But Ebba sorrowfully continued: "Jane Marie also thinks Peter a dreadful name, and that Jean Jacques sounds so well! O, how disagreeable that he should have been called Peter!"

I tried to comfort Ebba, and mentioned to her the various great men who had borne the same name. She thought but very little of the Apostle Peter; just as little of Czar Peter; the Herr Peder, of the popular song, made the name somewhat more poetical, and she was almost wholly reconciled to the name, when I showed her that Pedro and Peter were the same, and that a lately deceased emperor nearly connected with our own royal house bore the same name. She proposed to call her husband Pedro; I proposed also various abbreviations; and, after all, we concluded by laughing heartily at the whole affair; so that, in the end, Ebba was as much satisfied with the name of Peter as I am with the much less poetical name of Lars Anders.

We ended the day with blowing bubbles in the open calm air, with as much enthusiasm and delight as if we were still little children; and then I took her home in the cabriolet, giving up to her the reins sometimes, to her no small delight.

I was quite curious to see whether Jane Marie continued still in her state of discontent; it seemed to me impossible; but at the first greeting I perceived that it was so. I was quite depressed at this, and nearly lost all my hope of a friendly understanding between us, because I cannot love any one who is not reasonable and kind. Conduct like this, so properly called by the ugly name of sulking, turns life into a gloomy autumn day. A thousand times better is the fiery temper of Ma chère mère. She speaks out violently; but when she has "said her say" it is all over; she once more is perfectly kind, nor wears an angry face any longer to those who oppose her. Nevertheless, I am glad that I have not daily to crouch before her sceptre; and the more I compare Bear with other people, the more does he seem like an angel of peace.

Ma chère mère was very much occupied this evening with the new neighbour at Ramm. Partly because she had heard

so many reports of him greatly to his advantage, and partly because he had now shown her a great civility. Ma chère mère some time ago had mentioned, in company, that she longed for a roast of roebuck, and that it was her wish to have a pair of roes, in order that she might introduce the breed into the park. Before her misfortunes, Ma chère mère was a great lover of the chase, and had brought down many a swift-footed roebuck. Her new neighbour at Ramm, having heard of this, had now sent her a most delicious roast—a fat young roe, which he had shot; together with two live specimens of these creatures, which they had been fortunate enough to take in snares.

This present was accompanied by a very polite French note from the new neighbour; which said, that having accidentally heard of the wish of the former proprietor of Ramm, he now esteemed himself fortunate in being able to accomplish it, especially as he should himself soon become the proprietor of the estate, and then would cherish no higher wish than to stand in friendly connexion with so estimable a neighbour, in pledge and proof of which he prayed her to receive that which he had sent. The letter was signed “Antonio de Romilly.”

Ma chère mère was charmed with the French note, with the roebucks, and above all with the politeness of the new neighbour.

“ See !” said she, snapping her fingers, “ one can call that *savoir vivre*. Yes, these southlanders have not their equals anywhere in such things. We must see the man. I will invite him to my first great dinner-party; yes, even if he does not pay me a visit before. Such politeness as this is worth seven visits. But now I must answer this note, and that in French too. Fransiska shall read the note after I have finished it. Thank God, I have learned French grammatically, and used to both write and to speak it, as well as most people. Of late years I have forgotten something of it. I shall be very glad to bring my French into use again with this polite Monsieur de Romilly. It will be right pleasant to make his intimate acquaintance.”

It must be right agreeable to make the acquaintance of this man, say I with Ma chère mère, because a person of whom everybody speaks, and whom nobody sees, who displays bene-

fidence and politeness, yet whom nobody knows, is incontestably an extraordinary and interesting phenomenon.

Ma chère mère laboured long at her French epistle, and as I read it over I had difficulty to avoid smiling, it was so ornamental and old-fashioned. In part too, it was so like herself, written in so thoroughly antiquated a style, yet expressing so clearly and forcibly her meaning, that I considered it impossible and equally unnecessary to alter it. I left therefore the expression “Monsieur, et très honoré voisin,” “politesse magnanime,” “présent gentil et courtois,” and such-like extraordinary words, standing. I said that the note was good, and Ma chère mère, who had watched me with some little disquiet, was very much contented with the note, with herself and with me.

30th

Ah! I breathe again. The air is at last clear between Jane Marie and me; and the south wind which dispersed the mist is called—flattery.

The day before yesterday Bear came home, satisfied with himself, his journey, his business, and above all with his little wife, who, on her part, was not dissatisfied with him. Yesterday evening was the Sunday's dance at Carlsfors. We were invited by Ma chère mère to be present, because she wished the skål to be drunk to the two last arrived married couples, and to make a speech to the people on the occasion; all which would have been done on the Midsummer-day, had not Bear and Peter been absent.

Ma chère mère played on the violin for the dancing nearly the whole evening. Ebba danced from hearty love of the amusement, so did I. Jane Marie and her husband, who were out visiting, came in late, and were only spectators of the dance. I poured forth a stream of admiration of her toilet, which truly was most tasteful, and at last the grey cloud which had hung between us dispersed itself, and Jane Marie became, to my indescribable refreshment, friendly as ever. But with the Commedia Divina of our friendship all is, alas! over. That grieves me. I wish among my many neighbours and acquaintances to find a friend. Ebba is too much of a child; Miss Husgafvel too much of a bird, and Ma chère mère—is Ma chère mère. It would after all be but a poor pleasure to have many neighbours but no friends.

After the dance, Ma chère mère ordered the punch-bowl to be brought in, and skål to be drunk to the newly-married. She also made a speech thickly interlarded with proverbs. But upon the whole, this did not seem to be one of her most successful efforts.

Bear takes my letter with him to the town : I close it therefore in haste. I wonder whether anybody writes as long letters as I do. But for this reason you are my Maria, and I am your

FRANSISKA.

CHAPTER VI.

Rosenvik, 3d July.

As a bee goes from flower to flower, so go I from neighbour to neighbour, and collect honey for my hive. The harvest has been rich to-day ; and no wonder. For I was to-day with the flower of the valley, the good and amiable Serena.

Bear reminded me this morning that we had promised the old Dahls to spend a whole day with them. He therefore proposed that I should accompany him to the city this morning ; said he would deliver me at the Dahls, and come in himself there to dinner after he had visited his patients. I was frightened at this project at first, and made many objections against being left there quite early in the morning, like a box of pills or any other doctor's wares. Neither did it seem the most becoming thing in the world thus to fall upon strange people, and to establish oneself for a whole day in their house, whilst all the time they perhaps are wishing the unbidden guest at Nova Zembla. But against all this, Bear, in his laconic way, was remarkably eloquent, and overturned all my objections ; add to which, a secret thought of Serena and the kingdom of heaven captivated me. I dressed myself simply but prettily, according to Bear's taste ; and away rolled the cabriolet containing Bear and his little wife.

I was properly delivered up at time and place appointed. Bear took it into his obstinate head not to go in with me. I should go and speak for myself. In vain I represented to him that I was not so fortunate as a physic-bottle, which at the very least takes with it a paper label, whereon is indicated for what purpose it may serve ; and as for me, nobody

in the house would know what was to be done with me. Bear said that I had nothing to do but to greet them from him in a proper way, and that this and my countenance together would do what was needful.

We parted quarrelling.

As I went up the steps alone, it appeared to me that I could be of no more value than a person who comes with the intention of borrowing money ; but scarcely had I entered the door than I was ready to believe that I must be either "the cream to the coffee" or some much-longed-for present, so was I rejoiced over, and welcomed, and embraced ; all which I felt in my grateful soul to be set down to the account of my Bear. I arrived just as they sate down to coffee, ate, drank, talked, and felt myself, in short, like a child of the house.

And now I will send you in prose a description of the family which I have already drawn in poetical colours. They bear the same relation to each other as an every-day and a holiday—but both are of the kingdom of heaven. I speak not now of my own impressions, but from information which I have had from Miss Hellevi Husgafvel and Ma chère mère.

THE HOME.

For above half a century this ancient couple have inhabited the same house and the same rooms. There were they married, and there they will celebrate their golden-nuptials in the course of the next winter. The rooms are unchanged, the furniture the same as for fifty years ; yet everything is clean, comfortable, and friendly, as in a one-year-old dwelling. But it is more simple than the houses of our times. I know not what spirit of peace and grace it is which blows upon me in this house. Ah ! in this house fifty years have passed as a beautiful day. Here a virtuous couple have lived, loved, and worked together. Many a pure joy has blossomed here ; and when sorrow came, it was not bitter, for the fear of God and love illuminated the dark clouds. Hence emanated many a noble deed and many a beneficent influence. The happy children grew up ; they gathered strength from the example of their parents, went out into the world, built for themselves homes like this, and were good and fortunate. Often do they return with love and joy to the parental home, to bless and

to be blessed. Ah, my Maria! I feel that I am again sliding into the poetical vein. But what would you have? There are pictures of every-day life, which, let me turn them as I will, always stand in a poetical light. Yet I will endeavour to keep more to the earth. Thus the children, three sons and four daughters, come once a year with their children to visit their beloved parents, and extend new life in the home of their childhood—that home which is still to them as full of love and goodness as ever. It has only become stiller and more peaceful; because it is evening there, and the shadows of the grave begin to ascend round the revered parents.

And now let us glance at them.

THE OLD GENTLEMAN.

A long life of probity, industry, and beneficence, has impressed itself upon his expansive forehead and upon his open benevolent carriage. His figure is yet firm, and his gait steady. The lofty crown is bald, but a garland of silver-white locks surrounds the venerable head. No one in the town sees this head without bowing in friendly and reverential greeting. The whole country as well as the town loves him as their benefactor, and venerates him as their patriarch. He has created his own fortune; has sacrificed much for the public good; and, notwithstanding much adversity and loss, never let his spirit sink. In mind and conversation, he is still cheerful, and even full of jest and sprightliness; but for several years his sight has failed him greatly; and the gout, which makes its appearance at times, troubles his temper. Ah! the prose of life! But an angel moves around the couch to which suffering may confine him; his feet are moved and enwrapped by soft white hands; the sick chamber and the countenance of the old man grow bright—before Serena!

We shall not come out of the poetry of the house whilst she abides there.

THE OLD LADY.

An aged countenance and a bowed form, and you see an old woman; but show her something beautiful, speak to her of something amiable, and her mien, her smile, beams from the eternal youth which dwells immortal in her sensitive spirit. Then will you involuntarily exclaim, “What a beau-

tiful old lady!" If you sit near her and look into her mild pious eyes, you feel as if you could open your whole soul, and believe in every word she speaks as in the Gospel. She has lived through much and experienced much, yet she says that she will live in order to learn. Truly we must learn from her. Her tone and her demeanour betoken true breeding and much knowledge of life. She alone has educated her children, and still she thinks and acts both for children and children's children ; still bears home and family cares on her own shoulders, although she now supports herself on Serena.

Since the death of her youngest daughter, she is become somewhat melancholy. This is not observable in her words, but in her frequent sighs. Like her husband, she is universally revered and beloved ; and all agree in this, that a more perfect union than exists between this couple cannot be imagined.

Will you see in one little circumstance a miniature picture of the whole ? Every evening the old man himself roasts two apples—every evening when they are done he gives one of them to his "handsome old wife," as he calls her. Thus for fifty years have they divided everything with each other.

The good old lady called me Fransiska immediately ; and addressed me with the pronoun *thou*, in a kind grandmotherly tone that did my heart good. I can like Ma chère mère, but I could love this dear old lady.

And now to the third person—the peculiar beauty and ornament of the house.

SERENA.

Her mother was called Benjamina, and was like the Benjamin of the Bible—the youngest and best-beloved child of her parents. When scarcely eighteen she married a young man, who both possessed and deserved her whole love. It was a marriage beautiful as a spring day, but too soon cut short ! The daughter, who after two years was the fruit of this marriage, was named Serena ; and with her birth the mother's days on earth were ended. She blessed her daughter and died. The father followed her in a few months. They could not longer be separated. The cradle of the little orphan was taken to the house of the grandparents. Serena

was their comfort, and soon also their loveliest joy ; and not theirs only, for Serena was beloved by all their friends and acquaintance.

The beautiful life of her parents and their early death had thrown over the motherless child the mourning weeds which draw forth so easily the sympathetic tears of good people. Her childhood was one of suffering, a weakness in the hip, which kept her long confined, and cut her off from the pastimes of children, paled her cheeks, and gave to her lips that quiet smile of sadness which yet dwells there at times with all the power of a mysterious enchantment. All this, united to her quiet patience, and the intrinsic amiability of her whole being, captivated all hearts, and won for her the sympathy of all.

For a long time it seemed as if the languishing angel would extend her wings, and follow the ascension of her parents ; but it was not to be so. Watchful and true affection kept her still on earth. Like a rose on a sunny grave, like a young vine which clings with its tender twigs around firm and ancient stems, so Serena grew up, gladdened by the loving looks of friends, and tenderly sustained and led by those who had been the support of her parents. She became healthy ; smiled, played, developed herself, and ripened by little and little to a beautiful, harmonious being.

She learned everything with a degree of difficulty, but she retained what she learned in a faithful memory. Always timid to begin, she never relinquished that which she had once begun till it was completed, and well completed. Thus her teachers, who were in the beginning impatient, were in the end always satisfied. Serena was not richly endowed, but she did all so well, and then—she was so good, so true, so affectionate !

So she grew up, and became the flower of the valley. The earnestness of her spirit, the clearness of her understanding, made her happy ; happy with the joy of angels—the pure, animating, self-communicating joy.

“Look at Serena!” said every mother in the country to her daughter. The daughters looked at her, and endeavoured to resemble her whom they could not help loving.

But the prose in this picture, the earthly feature in this angel-image ! Ah, also this must be told ; Serena is lame

in her hip. The word frightens me, and I am ready to exclaim "No!" to that which I have just said. And if you imagine Serena to be a limping, crooked figure, I do cry out with all my might, "No! no! no! it is not so!" You must imagine a graceful, perfectly lovely figure, which, when walking, slightly bends forward without being disfigured thereby. Her lameness gives a slow undulating motion, which appears rather like an exception to the rule, than as a real defect. Is it the remembrance of a suffering, or the tone of her whole being, which so completely conceals this fault of nature? Whatever it may be, it inspires no other feeling in those who see her, but an involuntary desire to support her.

Serena's appearance, in other respects, you must imagine from my former description. The innocence of her brow, the clear child-like gleam of her blue eyes, charmed me as much now as when I saw her first; and I thought her still lovelier in her simple every-day dress, than in her festival garb.

I must not forget Gull-gul, who flew twittering around his lovely mistress. Madame Dahl told me, when I inquired how the little creature became so tame, that during the severe winter of two years ago, Serena found the little creature lying half-dead on the house floor. She took him up, cherished and fed him. The sparrow recovered; and since then has been as attached to Serena as if he understood how to be grateful. It is true that Serena tenderly cares for him, as she does for everything that is under her charge. He goes into his cage to eat, but, excepting at night, is never confined.

And now about myself, since I must not forget myself. Madame Dahl begged me to sing (how agreeable it is to be possessed of one little talent): I obeyed, was applauded, and thanked with warmth.

"And now Serena must sing some little thing," said old Mr. Dahl, quite gaily.

"O grandfather!" said she, blushing, "how it will sound after that which we have just heard!"

"My dear child," replied the old man, smiling, "do not let Madame Werner hear that you are vain."

"No," returned Serena joyfully, "and on that very account Madame Werner shall hear my weak, hoarse voice."

She sat down immediately to the instrument, and sang a

sweet little gem-like song of Lindeblad's. Her voice was not hoarse but weak, and evidently not much practised ; but she sang with so much soul, with so much thought, in word and tone, as gave me intrinsic delight.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, evidently charmed to the soul, "I would much rather hear that than all our Catalanis, Maras, Dulcamaras, or whatever they may be called, who are more of instruments than singers. This singing, at least, I comprehend with my heart as well as my understanding. If Serena had only had opportunity to learn, then—" and the old man looked very significantly.

"Are there then not teachers of singing in the town?" I asked.

"None, with the exception of old E., who sings terribly false. Several of our relations wished to take Serena with them to Stockholm, that there she might cultivate her talent, but she would not leave us. She knows very well that without her we should not find ourselves so well off. And therefore her voice must remain now sticking in her throat, and moreover will get quite hoarse because she reads so much Latin." With these words he extended his hand to her, and she embraced him with child-like warmth. Both laughed. "If you are not tired of singing," continued he, "come, my good child, and read me some Latin out of this new book of Victor—you know what—I always forget what the fellow is called. Will you, my child?"

"With all my heart," answered Serena, and the two went out together.

"Does Miss Löfwen read Latin?" inquired I with astonishment, from Madame Dahl.

"Ah, it's all nonsense!" said the good old lady smiling. "Since my old eyes have become so weak Serena has read to him. His favourite reading is novels and romances ; the last of which, he says, preserve his soul young. Now when there occurred passages in these books which Serena thought not quite proper to read aloud, she was accustomed to skip them ; but when it happened that this could not well be done, she said, 'there is some Latin here!' My husband, who is sometimes half asleep during the reading, let the excuse pass for some time, although he thought it rather odd that Latin should so often occur.

" 'It is an extraordinary way of writing,' said he sometimes, 'that our modern authors have got; it is a cursed pedantry,' etc., and he got quite excited about it. One day, however, it happened that Latin came so very often in the book she was reading, that my old man, astonished in the highest degree, began to search the matter to the bottom. When Serena had finished reading and left him to himself, he put on his double spectacles and began to study this imagined Latin. He soon, therefore, discovered how it was; and now this Latin is a standing point in his jokes against Serena, whom however he persuaded by little and little to be less exact regarding the Latin."

We continued for a long time to talk about Serena, and the good old lady listened with pleasure to all that I said respecting her favourite. At length, said she, with a sigh, "and yet she is much less lovely now than she was. It seems to me that for the last year she has become thinner, and she coughs at times. I fear that the confined life she leads with us is injurious to her. Dr. Werner has ordered country air and exercise. Many of our acquaintance have begged Serena to come to their country-seats; but she will not leave us, and we ourselves do not know properly what we should do without her, especially my husband, who will not hear of her leaving us. We have, therefore, thought next summer of renting in the neighbourhood of the city a little country-house, where we could have her with us, and yet benefit her health. In the mean time she must as often as possible ride on horseback in the country, and I and my husband will accompany her in the carriage. We think of beginning this regimen next week, when Serena will have a nice little safe horse."

Here I interrupted her to inquire if it would not be possible that Serena should take her rides to Rosenvik, and should now and then remain with me the whole day? I would take the greatest care of her; we would be out together in the fresh air, we would drink new milk, we would sing together; and God knows what I did not say beside, for a flood of eloquence came over me.

The old lady thanked me, looked half pleased and half troubled; did not know whether it could be done, and said

at last with a sigh, "We'll see what my husband says; we will speak with him."

I will speak with my Bear too, thought I, and get him on my side, and then who can withstand us? I was possessed with the greatest possible zeal to accomplish the affair. Bear came, and the moment he entered the door I surprised him with my project.

"My sweet Bear! if you love me, you must take my side, and speak for me and with me, that Serena come to Rosenvik, and that she spend a whole day there. You see, she will ride out for exercise, that you yourself have prescribed, angel! Prescribe now also that she ride to us. Say that it is necessary to her health. I will take care of her, I will sing with her. Say this to the old people, talk with them, manage that it shall be done! You will do it, my little Bear!"

"Heaven help us! What a flux de bouche! Could one only draw breath!—Uf!—Now I see that you are pretty much at home here, you Sea-cat!"

"Entirely through my own merits, and nobody else's, Bear," said I.

Bear was received and welcomed by the family as a very dear and much esteemed friend. He acts on these occasions in a pasha-like manner, and receives all friendliness and politeness as no more than his just tribute, and that may very well be correct.

As I have placed myself to-day on the prosaic side of things, I kept at dinner-time a watchful eye upon this part of the domestic arrangement; for without completeness in this respect, in the north at least, all the poetry of life evaporates like the odour of champagne. But I only discovered that I might learn right much from Serena, both as regarded cooking, arrangement, etc. For the last several years she has regulated, and that excellently, the domestic concerns. The sweet girl was an observant and graceful hostess to the whole table, whilst she, seated by her half-blind grandfather, seemed to devote her constant care to him.

After dinner I soon began to introduce anew my project regarding Serena. Bear threw himself with great reason and force upon the same theme, and we carried it through successfully. At first the old gentleman looked thoughtful; but when I mentioned how Serena and I could practise sing-

ing together, he assented joyfully, shook my hand, and said it was excellent! When Serena heard the consent of her grandparents given thus cordially, she showed what pleasure the idea afforded her also, embraced me, and said, with a tear in her eye, that I was quite too good to take so much interest in her and her voice.

I was pleased to my heart's core, and being light in spirit, everything else seemed pleasant. The evening passed in agreeable conversation. Mr. Dahl spoke warmly of Mr. de Romilly's large donation, and of all the advantages the country would derive from school instruction, of the kind and to the extent which they now could adopt. The old, yet still vigorous man was already in full activity as director of the scheme. In this, his seventieth year, he is as ardent for the well-being of his kind as any enthusiast of twenty. When one sees an instance of this kind, one has a desire to live long.

Serena has the power of being unwearingly entertaining. One cannot exactly say that her conversation is in any way distinguished, but it expresses a certain high tone of spirit which I call womanliness. I wish that she were my sister. Oh, if I could only possess her for my friend! The wish is so livingly awake in me. It is true that, compared with me, she is very young, and she does not exactly look upon life as I do; still she attracts me irresistibly, as it were, into her angel-world.

On our way home, Bear and I spoke almost entirely of her. Bear was much more eloquent on this subject than he is accustomed to be. "She is a most estimable young lady," said he, amongst other things. "It is quite affecting to see how altogether she quite sacrifices herself for her old grandparents; how self-forgetting she is! As physician in the family, I have had good opportunity of observing this. I know quite certainly that she has declined four good offers of marriage; people say more; always under the plea that she could not sufficiently love the admirer; but the certain reason was, that she would not leave the old people. They let it be very well seen that they will not part with her. Two years ago, a young amiable Englishman, who was most desperately in love with her, proposed He was refused like the

rest, although every one believed that Serena was not indifferent to him. He did not conceal his despair, fell into dissipation, and a year afterwards died unfortunately. People ascribed this to the desperate state of his affairs, but certainly the unfavourable termination of his love affair was the chief occasion of his misfortunes. Be that as it may, this is certain, that this circumstance made a strong impression on Serena, and ever since her mood has been less cheerful, and her cheek has become paler. But her calmness and her amiability, nevertheless, remain."

"May she gather joy and roses at Rosenvik!" exclaimed I.

5th July.

I have seen him! I have seen him! The woodman; the spy; Don Miguel; the polite one; the beneficent one; the mystery,—in one word, the new neighbour at Ramm, Mr. de Romilly! I have seen him! and if I were to live fifty years, and never to see him again, I should never forget him.

Is he then so handsome? I do not know. Or so ugly? I do not know. Is he so amiable? I do not know. Or so unamiable? I do not know. Who is he like? I do not know. Is he a hero for romance? I do not know. What is he? I do not know. Such were the questions put to me by Miss Husgafvel to-day, and such were my answers to her.

Now listen, my Maria.

Yesterday afternoon I was agreeably surprised by a visit from the brothers and sisters-in-law. Already had they made all possible voyages of discovery in my little world, and we were beginning to get quite merry and comfortable together, and to turn over the project of taking supper altogether on Svanö, when suddenly the door opened, and at the same time was darkened by a tall, strong, and gloomy figure. At the first glance I recognised the woodman, and was quite oppressed. I know not why, but it was as if a voice exclaimed to me, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Bear met the new comer, and with his accustomed cordial frankness bade him welcome. The stranger mentioned his name in a voice that seemed to me dissonant. Bear introduced me to him, and then all took their seats.

There is no one in the world who asks fewer questions than Bear, and strangers in particular might remain for him

eternal mysteries. Not so Jean Jacques. He questions people without ceremony, although in an easy manner, and not so as to offend any one who is not too sensitive. In a few minutes he had inquired from Mr. de Romilly how long he had been in Sweden, how long he thought of remaining here, how it pleased him, and so on. One must confess that his zeal of questioning did not enliven the stranger much; for I never heard any one return such short, indefinite, and dry answers. Notwithstanding all this, I was infected by Jean Jacques, and even I inquired, speaking like the others in French, whether Swedish did not appear to him a harsh language. To my great astonishment, he answered in Swedish, with a foreign accent, yet in an altogether altered and melodious voice, "On the contrary, it appears to me very sweet, particularly in the mouth of a lady."

"You speak Swedish?" said I, astonished.

"Some years ago," answered he in the same mild voice, "I passed a winter in Sweden, and learned your beautiful language then."

The conversation was now continued in Swedish; but Mr. de Romilly took only little part in it, although Jean Jacques did his utmost to draw him out, by touching on subjects which must be familiar to the stranger. Especially he related a deal respecting Portugal, its trade and colonies. From this subject the conversation turned on the various races of mankind,—a subject which Jean Jacques handled both interestingly and well. But it appeared to me that he was unjust towards the race which he called Ethiopic, inasmuch as he placed them only in the same grade with animals; declaring further, that the Negro was totally incapable of any higher degree of culture. Peter in part combated this assertion. The slave trade came to be spoken of. To my amazement, Jean Jacques justified it; and asserted, that the Negro possessed no value at all, except as the slave of the cultivated European; and could only as such enjoy any degree of happiness.

Peter opposed this to the utmost, and on sound principles. Jean Jacques quoted passages from Tarlton and Gascoin, in support of his proposition. Peter answered triumphantly with assertions from Wilberforce and Canning. All this time the stranger spoke not one word, although he evidently

listened to the conversation with the most lively interest; while at one time a scornful, bitter smile would curl upon his lip, at another an extraordinary flash would seem to light up his dark eyes. I could not remove my gaze from him, but it was impossible to say to which side his opinions inclined. Yet it appeared to me that he listened with the greatest satisfaction to Jean Jacques, especially while in a long and zealous speech he was endeavouring to place the Negro in the lowest point of view, more particularly as regarded his intellectual being; asserting that Nature had herself planted an impassable barrier against his advance.

"Do with the Negro what you will," said Jean Jaques in conclusion, "heap upon him education and enlightenment, still his understanding will ever remain slavishly subject to that of the European; develop all his faculties, and he will still remain only a machine in the hands of the European. He is designed by nature to serve him."

I saw this while, by Bear's grimaces, that this speech did not much please him; and when Jean Jacques had finished, he said with emphasis, "I know not whether the Negro be capable of a higher intellectual development, neither do I know whether, after all, the intellect be the most important part of the human conformation, but this I do know, that the Negro is a man, and as a man he is my brother."

"Brother!" repeated De Romilly, in a voice which startled me, so extraordinarily wild and almost threatening did it sound.

"Yes," replied Bear with warmth, "I say brother; and whoever trades in his life or his freedom is a monster—is worse than a murderer."

"A murderer!" repeated the stranger, with a spasmodic contraction of the eyebrows, and in such a gloomy voice as involuntarily turned all eyes upon him. The expression of his countenance changed again, and he remarked quietly, but earnestly, to Bear, "Monsieur, je pense entièrement comme vous."

He said no more, but sate as if his thoughts were sunk into himself, nor appeared to pay the slightest attention to the after-conversation which Jean Jacques had led, with his usual ease, to subjects quite different.

After a while I spoke again of our little excursion to

Svanö, and proposed to the whole company that they should immediately adjourn there, whilst I would follow them a little later with the collation.

Mr. de Romilly did not seem to have much taste for so pastoral a meal. He excused himself, and shortly after took his leave; and we, as we were about to set off to Svanö, saw him mount his beautiful black horse, and with a polite parting salutation vanished amid the green trees.

I felt myself relieved when he was gone; and yet involuntarily I looked after him with the desire to obtain yet one more glance of that dark handsome figure.

We proceeded to Svanö, and had a merry evening there. The green grass seemed to neutralise all pretensions and claims to precedence: Jane Marie and Ebba drank milk out of the same glass!

But as yet I can speak of nothing but the stranger, and for the whole evening could think of nothing else. Jane Marie bantered me on my absence of mind. I cannot get his image from my thoughts. I have now seen *en face* this much-talked-of neighbour; and yet I know not what I should say of him. The first impression which he makes is of great simplicity, and at the same time of great power, but a power that would be oppressive. He reminds me of a beautiful thunder-cloud. He is very tall; of a strong build, and rather stout than otherwise. The countenance strong and manly, with a very dark complexion. Several scars, as of sabre wounds, no way disfigured the face. An agreeable expression at times plays about the mouth; but that which spoils the whole countenance, and gives at the same time a something startling, nay, almost hideous to it, is his habit of contracting together the great black eyebrows, till they form together one direct line over the nose. As soon as they separate again the countenance brightens, and one is almost compelled to exclaim, "It is beautiful!" Under those brows are seated a pair of eyes which I cannot understand. They seem to be changeably black and burnt-yellow. Sometimes too, even when the mouth speaks, the eyes will be perfectly inexpressive; again they will fix themselves with such a keen, penetrating glance, that one quails involuntarily before them; again they will sometimes flash forth glances suddenly, like flames bursting abroad in night. This wonderful and

rapid change prevails in his voice likewise ; and I am surprised if it do not go even deeper than this. Another thing I also noticed in him, which I consider a bad omen, because I have observed it in other men of violent passions, that is, a vein upon the forehead, which has the exact form of the thunderbolt, especially when any excitement strongly agitates him.

For the rest, his demeanour pleases me. It is perfectly simple, without any trace of constraint, or any pretensions whatever, and yet at the same time he has nothing frank about him, and nothing which inspires confidence. He seems to me like some powerful element, of which I know not whether it be good or bad, whether it will destroy or make happy. But if those wonderful eyes were rivetted in love on any one ; if this voice spoke words of love—then, believe me, they would be dangerous. Above all, I have never seen any one who so much resembled a mystery. I have both desire and anxiety to acquire a thorough understanding of him.

But thank God that my Bear is no gloomy secret ; that his soul is clear and undisguised as God's daylight ! This constitutes the blessedness of united life, and the peace of home.

July 6th.

To-morrow Baron Stellan S. comes. I cannot say that I rejoice about it. Bear is quite ardent with preparations for his reception. There is scarcely anything good enough for him. He will be treated and petted as if he were a little coquettish countess. Such a dainty gentleman must be a weariful guest, especially at the rustic Rosenvik.

“ Yes, yes, Bear ! he shall have your Turkish slippers. The real china wash-hand basin. Yes, yes, child ! Your favourite shall have all ! ”

I wish the gentleman of the bedchamber sate in Constantinople ! However, Bear is so happy ; he likes the man so, that on his account I will appear amiable.

10th July.

Baron Stellan is here now ; all goes on excellently with the cousin. He is polite, agreeable, seems satisfied with everything, and is one with whom it is extremely easy to live. He takes walks with Bear, talks of physic and politics with him. While I work, he either reads aloud to me, or chats pleasantly.

One soon becomes as well acquainted with him, as if one had known him for years. It is true that life in the country assists a great deal, particularly when persons are together the whole day.

Bear has desired me, on Cousin Stellan's account, to stay at home; and to make it a point that he shall find in our house both pleasure and contentment. Bear loves his former ward with all his heart. See here his portrait, made with a few flourishes of the pen.

I could almost name him as the opposite of De Romilly. This one resembles a vast, wild, natural scene. I might compare Stellan to a lovely, perfect, well-kept English pleasure-garden. A fine education has polished Cousin Stellan, and made the very best of him. His handsome and graceful figure presents itself easily. The unconstraint of his carriage ennobles his natural gifts. The mouth, round which plays at times an elegant and rather sarcastic smile, shows, when it opens, the most beautiful teeth, whose whiteness is set off the more by the dark-coloured moustache. The eyes are not large, but they have a fine expression; and the dark brown hair falls in graceful curls upon the white forehead. The toilet is performed with the most extraordinary care and much taste. What can I say more?

Cousin Stellan has many talents; draws, sings well, talks in the most agreeable manner; and has with all this, at least in the country, something unassuming in tone and bearing, for which one thanks him, especially when one takes into consideration his position in society and his prospects in life.

Somewhat too much, I think, he busies himself with his toilet. But there is nothing bad in that. It is so very natural for one who is young, rich, and handsome, to do so.

11th.

He is wonderful, the worthy Cousin Stellan; and I cannot understand really what he properly is! In the first place, I see that he is not a true Christian. Yesterday evening he spoke a deal about Mohammedanism, and called it the wisest and best of all religions; he praised the Koran as the best of books. He declared quite candidly that he wished with all

his heart that he had been born either a Turk or a Persian, that he might have spent all his days in oriental pleasures—might have had his serail and such like.

I was quite excited at this speech, and contended warmly against the Koran, without knowing much about its contents, and said many contemptuous things against all these Turkish ideas. Cousin Stellan did not allow himself to be disturbed by all this, but spoke his thoughts with reference to the highest state of human happiness quite distinctly. It was not at all edifying to hear. I was a little angry ; and beyond this I was as much provoked by my own warmth as by Stellan's coolness, and more than all by Bear, who, during all our discourse, never spoke a word, but only made the most horrible faces while he was carving his chess-queen.

The conversation was interrupted by the evening meal, and was not afterwards renewed ; but I could not let Bear go to rest that night before I had some talk with him on the morals of his golden-youth. I must confess that neither was I much more contented with Bear, at least, on this occasion. He defended Stellan quite too well, and assured me that notwithstanding his Turkish notions, he was a most upright fellow, and never would be guilty of anything unworthy. "His only error," said he, "is a little levity as regards women ; but this," added he, "with young men, is such a common failing that one must not judge them too harshly on that account."

"Good Bear!" said I ; "and now I'll tell you what ;—if he, while you are away, out of a little levity endeavour to win my heart, I shall think that this is only something quite usual in a young man, so I shall not be very severe with him."

Bear looked so much astonished and confounded, that I laughed, embraced him, and set him right. Bear at last came over to my opinion, that it might be better if Stellan possessed sounder principles ; if he were steady and well married. His mother and his whole family greatly wish that he should marry, but he himself shows not the least inclination to do so. Bear encouraged me to talk with him of the happiness of marriage, and I certainly will not omit to do so, nor also to read a sort of catechism to him ; he is not Sultan yet, and must hear the truth.

13th, Evening.

I have, my dear Maria, certainly many qualities of a good preacher ; as for instance, faith, seriousness, and zeal ; but, alas ! not the power of convincing my auditor.

Will you now, good Maria, hear my sermon and its consequences ? I sate by the open window, my heart was light, and I sang in emulation of the birds in the elder-bush. Stellan came in, and seating himself near me, began pulling to pieces some beautiful monthly roses which stood in a glass on the table. I thought the opportunity a favourable one, and felt myself excited in spirit to commence a lecture.

In order to lead the conversation, I began, perhaps not very discreetly, to reprove him for destroying the flowers, which, if spared, would have afforded him more pleasure.

"They would at all events soon wither," said he, still pursuing his employment ; "and it is exactly their perishableness which makes them beautiful to me. I know no flowers so wearisome as everlastings."

You may thus easily see which way the door was opened ; I rushed in hastily, and began at once on the chapter of marriage. I fell at once upon Stellan's favourite idea, and exalted the desirable and pure joys of life in opposition to fleeting pleasures, to a fluttering butterfly-life. I painted in warm colours, which I drew from my own heart, the beauty, the unending happiness, which develops itself in a well-assorted marriage.

Cousin Stellan answered me, at first, only evasively,—sometimes with a little jest, sometimes with politeness—as for example, "If all ladies were like Fransiska, I would be a married man directly. If all marriages resembled yours," etc.

I affected to hear nothing of all this ; but in my zeal to get him married, placed, as it were, in array before him one pretty and well-bred girl after another. But Stellan found faults in every one. This had large feet ; that had ugly teeth ; the third dressed ill ; the fourth had a disagreeable voice. At last, quite provoked by all these objections, I asked him whether he really, after all, thought himself so over and above magnificent !

"God forbid !" exclaimed he, with an agreeable but peculiar intonation ; but I saw that he was entirely satisfied with himself ; and as I could not deny but that he was uncom-

monly handsome and agreeable, I began to speak of the inward man ; reproved him for his superficialness ; said that mere outward attractions were nothing but dust, and exalted the beauty of the soul as most important, especially in several of the young ladies, whose hands and feet he had censured so. In connexion herewith I said the most beautiful things on the subject of family life, which I praised with a zeal equal to that of the deceased Miss Rönnquist.* My descriptions affected me, and made me quite warm ; but Stellar cooled me down by an affected yawn, and by quietly humming the melody of "Old Noah."† This made me quite angry, and I told him that he was a heathen, an ourang-outang, unworthy of the hand of a noble girl, and that he did not deserve to partake of the highest and purest happiness of earth.

All at once Stellan became quite grave, and said, "But is that happiness of which you speak, Fransiska, really attainable ? Is it not like the Phoenix, only a beautiful fable on earth ? Can you, Fransiska, you who appear so certain and so much at home on this subject, name to me among all the families that you know, one single one which is really happy, and really united, and which blesses the band that holds them together, not merely at one moment of their lives, but under all the changes of their lifetime ? Name me but one such family, Fransiska ?"

Stellan looked at me earnestly and keenly, and I began to reflect and to consider.

Is it not the most absurd thing in the world that often the very word, the very thing that we require, escapes from us ? It was exactly so with me and the happy family. I fancied I knew many such, but now I could not bethink myself of a single one. I sought and sought. I sprang into this house, and out of that house, among all my acquaintance ; I grew anxious and warm, because I could not find that for which I sought. With a secret mischievous delight Stellan sate there and looked expectingly at me.

In order to save myself and family happiness, I thought it best to object to his extravagant demands, and began thus :— "Perfect happiness is nowhere found on earth—" Stellan

* A character in "The President's Daughters."

+ Gubben Noach, a popular Swedish song by the favourite poet of the people Bellman.

interrupted me. " You are right, Fransiska, and least of all is it to be found in family life. The ephemera man can only enjoy happiness, or bliss, on earth, on the condition that he live there as an ephemera ; that, like a butterfly, he rock himself on the tree twigs ; suck the honey from the flowers ; and, like it too, do not fetter himself to the ground. So soon indeed as he does this, he is the prey of worms and creeping things. Then, all that is dull and insipid in life comes over him, the wings of the Psyche fall off—the butterfly becomes the worm. Believe me, Fransiska, I have seen more of life than you ; and sadly too much either to praise it, or to wish myself to play the part of a ' père de famille.' The family is an instrument which sooner or later gets out of tune ; this is in the nature of the strings, and their relationship to each other. I will show you this in some families with whom I am acquainted. I might begin with my own family, since I also, Fransiska, have had parents and brothers and sisters ; have also heard quarrels, have quarrelled myself ; have been envious, and have bickered with my own flesh and blood. But this now is all passed ; we have separated, and in consequence have different interests, and thereby—are become good friends.

" I will speak of the A.'s. They had, I believe, a good income till the children grew up ; these children were badly educated ; they turned out ill, and now, through them, the parents have sunk into poverty and care.

" The B.'s did quite differently. They were stern and despotic. They are left alone. The children have all escaped from home, shunning it even more than a prison.

" The C.'s made it their most important business that their children should be well educated. They had them instructed in everything ; gave them teachers of every kind ; spared no cost ; and rejoiced and were proud for a while of the progress their children made. The children were rich in knowledge and talent, and despised—their parents, who, in comparison of them, were ignorant. Silently grieve the parents like shadows over their brilliant children.

" With the D.'s it appears much better. They have no children ; they are rich. They give now, as they have done for thirty years, magnificent suppers ; but if you saw them near, if you knew the emptiness, the coldness of their life—

ha! The eatables on their table are the only things that warm and unite them.

"At the E.'s, for a long time all was gay. They were joyous, friendly, hospitable. Their daughters were called the three Graces. They made parties and gave entertainments. Years went on. The three Graces grew old in the paternal house; they withered away together. The world forgot them. They remain together alone, and pout through their uneventful life. In an evening they sit at a round table, light candles, and wait for company—which never comes.

"I will not speak about the F.'s. The husband has *one* will, the wife another; it is perpetual storm there. The children are accustomed to say, 'If there be not tempest in the north, there is in the south—but there is always a north wind.'

"'If one only knew how to keep things smooth!' said good Madame G., as she wished to heal a breach which her violent husband had occasioned in the domestic union. Thus has the family gone on smoothening, and has by degrees smoothened itself out of all comfort and order: they keep on smoothening still, and manage just to keep together. It is a family in a state of perpetual asthma: it neither lives nor dies.

"My mother wished that I should take a wife out of the H. family. I went there one evening—all looked charmingly; the daughters handsome and well-dressed. All perfumed and comfortable. I went again one forenoon. A pair of—not clean—stockings lay upon a chair in the drawing-room, and an infamous smell of sour paste met me from somewhere. I went into another room, and away flew the daughters—from the spinning-wheel. Housewifery is an excellent thing, but spinning deranges the toilet—and to smell sour paste only once is an abomination. Sour paste and domestic happiness do not at all accord in my mind."

"But that is childish!" exclaimed I, "you will never be able to live on the earth with over-refinement like that!"

"Yes," answered he, "I confess that this may seem very trifling. But such is my nature. The sour paste of housewifery deters me from becoming the head of a family."

"My friend J.," continued he, "had been married four

years, during which time I had not seen him. Not long since I happened to be in the country where he resided, and availed myself of the repeated invitations I had received to visit him in his Idyllian home. In the first room I found two barefooted servant-girls scouring the floor ; in the second, I nearly fell down, having entangled my foot in a string which fastened a spinning-wheel to the leg of the stove ; in the third, I heard children crying with all their might. I waited several minutes that the crying might cease ; I grew tired of this, however, and so, half-dead, rushed, with a leap over the scouring-tubs, out of this Idyllian home."

" You chose your visiting time very badly," said I, vexed ; " must not people have their houses scoured ? and must not little children cry sometimes ? Ought not one to have patience with little children ?"

" That I believe, Fransiska," returned he ; " but exactly because I do not possess this beautiful patience, and because I do not think these family scenes are to be coveted, exactly on that account I am not suited for the marriage state. But I have more weighty objections than these, against domestic life. There is a something in man, which tends ever to repel. The more individuals are brought into close and enduring connexion, the more this stone of repulsion is felt, the more do its jagged edges and angles wound. Outward circumstances assist this ; one person crowds another so easily, one is mutually in each other's way, and the consideration which one person has and must have for another, is only like a leaden weight upon his freedom and his enjoyment. If it be commanded that we live one for another, then, properly speaking, nobody lives happily for himself. I do not deny that there may be high and enduring happiness in marriage and in domestic life, but these instances are the few exceptions. They are the echoes which sound across to us from a lost paradise : and as I am speaking on this subject, what do you say to the apple which presents itself in the history of Adam and Eve ? It has descended to all their posterity, and most families have an apple to bite, which occasions discord and want.

" Would you know, Fransiska, where the greatest need, the greatest ennui, the greatest envy, the greatest bitterness, the most intrinsic mutual hate, are ;—would you know where

the most tearful eyes, the palest cheeks, the most joyless, the most wearied hearts, may be found? I will show you them all in marriage, in the domestic circle—in one word, in family life!"

I cannot tell you how I felt after these descriptions of Stellan's, because I was compelled in so many things to acknowledge truth; and although he saw all in a one-sided point of view, and I could laugh at many things, as for instance at the sour paste, yet many others gave me really a pang at the heart. I was shocked at the thought that there was so much mental poverty, so much deep misery in family life. But still the idea of family life was one which I loved; one which I had faith in, which had grown up with all that was good in me. All this now seemed profaned by Stellan. I felt vexed; I felt anxiety and pain,—and a thousand mixed feelings filled my eyes with tears, whilst I exclaimed, "But I am happy! Bear is happy!—we are happy!"

"Yes! now in the honeymoon, and perhaps yet for one, two, or three years," said the ui merciful Stellan. "But let years, let children, let cares come—you will have, for instance, ten girls—what will you do with all these? No money, no marriage; one girl lame, one diseased."

"Ten girls?" I was shocked. I saw them already around me, tall, grown-up, demanding that I should give them happiness as I had given them life. I saw one of them sickly; one diseased: I sank down under this burden, which was too heavy for me; and whilst I wept without being able to say a word, up rose Stellan, threw away my last monthly rose, and went out. The abominable wretch! I almost wished never to see him again!

"Ten girls?" For a long time I could think of nothing but these words and weep. By degrees, however, I endeavoured to calm myself, and began seriously, and as a Christian, to reflect on the affair, and by and by this began to assume quite an altered appearance. I was no longer shocked at my ten girls, but was quite consoled by them. I would devote myself altogether to them: I would make of them industrious, God-fearing human beings. They should become good and happy; should love one another; and, sound in heart, should be able to face the world. The more I studied my family picture, the more alluring it seemed. I began regularly

to love my ten girls, but most of all the lame and the afflicted one. I created no illusion; but I felt in my strengthened heart that it really would succeed, and that, with God's and my husband's help, I would make the ten girls fortunate. And then I thought how rich I should be at the day of judgment, when I could say, "Here I am, Father, with the children that thou hast given me."

So felt I, so thought I, and I was calm and joyful in spirit. I went out into the birch grove to cool my red eyes and cheeks; and then I had several things to look after in the kitchen and the store-room, and thus, what with one thing and what with another, I had nearly forgotten my ten girls! but as Bear came home, some way or other all the depression, all the despondency seemed to fall upon my heart again. I became again as weak as a child. When my husband came up and kissed me, I threw my arms round his neck, and both laughed and cried at the same time.

"No doubt, Bear," said I, "you would love me and be satisfied with me, and we should be happy even if we had ten daughters; and you would love them all, even if they were lame and diseased."

I could not properly finish my speech.—Good Bear! he made such a horrible face, and looked just as if all the ten daughters were hanging round his neck. But as he saw me so agitated, he gave me a glass of water and begged me to speak Swedish,—he imagined, probably, that the "ten daughters" was Hebrew.

I explained to him the whole affair in perspicuous Swedish, and then he laughed loudly, and assured me that he should always be happy, and that he would always love both me and the children I should give him!

Stellan came in at the same moment. He appeared embarrassed and distressed to see me so much excited, but in the joy of my heart I offered him my hand and exclaimed, "We will be happy, my Bear and I; we will be happy even with ten daughters, and even if they, every one of them, be sickly. We will love each other, and love them also."

Stellan was really affected; he blushed, kissed my hand, and prayed me to forgive his having jested so rudely. Bear was kind to me as an angel, and would not go to table till I was altogether calmer. I hastened to become so, but still

could scarcely swallow a morsel. I fancy my ten daughters stuck in my throat ; beyond this, I fancied that Bear looked at me with a degree of consternation. Ten daughters ! That really is too many !

But I will not think any more about it. Whilst Bear and Stellan take a walk, and the evening paints the scenes of nature in sepia and Indian ink, I will cast another glance on Cousin Stellan's ornamental pictures of family life. Are they really true ? In many individual cases, ah yes ! but in the general, no, oh no ! And even were there in earthly families more of shadow than light, thou allwise Artist, who hast painted in such magnificent light the great picture of life, Thou wouldest teach us to spread out the colouring better upon our small canvas. But Thou hast already taught us ; and it now depends upon ourselves. If we labour with fervency and truth, our family picture will be beautiful, and will be worthy of its place in the collection of the Most Blessed.

"One finds," says Stellan, "a something among human beings that always tends to thrust them asunder." I grant that ; one finds envy, pretension, unreasonableness, ennui, and a thousand large and small stones of repulsion, which are capable of occasioning bitter feeling. I grant also that they are felt most keenly exactly when the circle is most confined—in family life. What then ? Is there no power, mild yet energetic, whose efficacy consists in equalising and sweetening all, and changing even evil into good ? Who will not here remember the doctrine of the Apostle, and whom has it not blessed a thousand times in his life—"Love is patient and mild, etc.?"

I will now examine a few of Stellan's family scenes. I will leave the external relationship as it is, but will conduct into the interior bosom of these families the angel-sisters, Truth and Love. Then behold how the picture will be changed ! See, for example, the family with the talent-gifted children and the uneducated parents. True instruction, true enlightenment, would have ennobled the children. It never would have happened then that they would lightly have esteemed good and upright parents because they were better informed than they. They would have known that true human worth consists in moral qualities and in upright con-

luct. They would have surrounded the parents with reverence and gratitude, enlivened their home, and beautified their days with their talents.

And then the three Graces ! In fact a melancholy picture. I must yawn when I think of it; but it is not the family bond, but vanity, highmindedness, and inward emptiness, which has placed them in this puppet condition.

If Stellan tear away happiness from families, I would willingly know where he places it. I will ask him what men, and what position in life, he regards as the happiest ? Perhaps a bachelor's life ! But then he must be an egotist, who disowns all bonds of nature ; I envy no one such a happiness. But I will ask Stellan if he himself be happy.

13th.

I have asked Stellan. At first he would only give an evasive answer, jested, and was witty, but without joyousness ; but as I questioned him still more earnestly, and besought him to speak the truth, he also became earnest, and said, "I am not happy ! Life appears to me poor, and I often feel an almost insupportable emptiness within myself."

"Ah, thank God !" exclaimed I, quite charmed and excited. He looked at me astonished ; and I continued : "Thus you are not the unworthy egotist that you must have been, if you could have been happy with your way of thinking. You have described married life so as to make one weep ; but I, Stellan, could describe to you the life of an old bachelor, and you would find it so miserable, so barren, that you would not give a pinch of snuff for it. But thus it need not be with you, Stellan ; you are a good thinking being ; you will discover the true worth of life, and will renounce all extravagant pretensions and all exaggerated sensibilities ; you will become happy through noble employment, through an amiable wife, through domestic and family life."

He smiled half sorrowfully, shook his head, and said something about sour paste.

"But Cousin Stellan," said I, "in our house also domestic business goes forward ; also here do we spin, make paste, and scour. Is it here, then, so uncomfortable ?"

"If all women were like you, Fransiska," returned Stellan, took my hand, kissed it, said something about "this white,

fine hand," kissed it again and again, became crimson, and cast upon me an extraordinary glance. I also became crimson and felt I know not how, drew my hand back, began to talk of the weather, and then went directly into the kitchen. A stupid scene on the whole! It must not occur again un-reproved. No, so sure as my Bear lives and I am his Fanny!

Think, if Ma chère mère's lecture should actually serve my turn, and I really should find an occasion to say—"Sir, you are mistaken," etc. But in no case should I go directly to my husband and say—"Dear friend, so and so has occurred." A woman who loves herself and her duty can take care of herself. One does not need therefore to gens-d'armise. But perhaps at this very moment I am doing so, when I am shocked at so slight an affair.

In the mean time, I have a sort of satisfaction in knowing that Stellan, with his way of thinking and feeling, is not happy; and had I only properly reflected, I needed not to have asked the question. Stellan with all his gifts is an ennuyé. He opens a book, reads a little, yawns, and throws it again aside. He takes a newspaper, and does exactly the same. He begins a drawing, and leaves it uncompleted. He has real interest and pleasure in nothing. He is willingly in the fresh air, loves nature and flowers, but is so easily annoyed with the least thing. It is now too warm, now too cold, for him; sometimes it is windy, and the wind is to him something horrible. Extraordinary! this man, in every-day life so affected, so solicitous of his own convenience, is yet, as I have heard from Bear, as determined as bold. He has good intellect, fine knowledge, and might perhaps become a distinguished man, if he would only give himself the trouble to study. But perhaps he smells sour paste in books. And in that he may be correct, even beyond the binding.

14th.

No; I was not wrong to gens-d'armise, and to be upon my guard. They are precisely the little things which must put people on their guard; for the proverb is true—"A great fire often arises from a small spark." How often is a slur, deserved or undeserved, cast on the reputation of a young woman, merely because she has not been circumspect in little things.

We spent yesterday afternoon on Svanö. Cousin Stellan was unusually lively and polite. On our return home he invited Bear and me to a game at ring-throwing. I accepted the proposal gladly ; and soon our rings, wreathed with their pink ribbons, were flying among the green trees, and merrily and dexterously we caught them again on our sticks. Bear threw several times, but soon grew weary, panted, sent all pleasures which required exertion to the fiend, and so went into the house. I confess my error, Maria. As a rational wife, true to her duty, I ought to have followed my husband. But I was so heartily delighted with the game, and had not the least desire to leave off. So, warm, ardent, and almost wild, Stellan and I continued to throw our rings, all this while getting farther and farther from the house. At length twilight came on, so that we could not distinctly see the course of the rings, and Stellan's remained hanging behind me in a birch-tree. I sprang towards it, and leaped up to reach it, when I suddenly found myself embraced by Stellan, whilst his lips whispered close to my curls, "Fanny, dear Fanny!" I was excited by a thousand strange feelings ; but in a moment I extricated myself and said—odd enough—in Ma chère mère's own words, "Baron S., you mistake yourself! There—upon the tree, hangs your ring!" This I spoke with so much emphasis that I was understood immediately.

"Aha!" said Stellan, somewhat confused as I thought, while he reached down his ring.

"It gets cool now," continued I, "it is best to go in;" and, without further parley, hastened to the house. Stellan slowly followed, humming an air out of "Fra Diavolo."

It was not till half an hour afterwards that he came in. I was sitting beside my own good Bear, and telling him how dear he was to me, which communication he received with his good-tempered Pacha-air, as Stellan entered. He held a beautiful spray of wild roses in his hand, which he presented to me, saying, "I have taken away all the thorns."

"Many thanks," said I, took the spray, and stuck it—in my bosom? No, Maria, you could not believe that ; I stuck it in Bear's button-hole! Stellan hummed the air anew, and shortly after we separated somewhat coldly.

Oh, no, my Bear! Your confidence in me shall not be abused! I will not in the least deceive it. My ten daughters shall, at the least, receive from their mother the inheritance of an unspotted reputation and a good example.

But what shall I now do? I will not sit here at home the whole day, in order to keep company with Cousin Stellan; neither can I leave the house, because Bear has so expressly desired me to remain at home; much less will I go to him and say—"My friend, so-and-so," etc., because this would only disturb his peace and the relation between him and his young friend, who has certainly no bad intention, but is only thoughtless. I know now what I shall do. This morning I have household occupation; in the afternoon we go to Carlsfors, and introduce Stellan to Ma chère mère. To-morrow Serena comes to me; and then I will move heaven and earth but she shall come and spend from eight to fourteen days with me at Rosenvik. I will compel Bear to tyrannise over the whole Dahl family. It will do Serena good and me also. It will be charming!

15th.

It is vexatious that Cousin Stellan should have adopted exactly Jane Marie's method of indicating discontent. There is, it is true, some little difference in the way and means; because Stellan does not exactly sulk, but he feigns an indifference and coldness which are anything but agreeable. He would convince me, as it seems, that I am the very person in the world about whom he would least concern himself. I try to make him feel that I do not notice it. But it always grieves me not to be in entire friendliness with every one about me. However, I am now cold towards Stellan, lest he should imagine that I want to decoy him back.

We spent yesterday at Carlsfors, where Ma chère mère received Stellan in an extraordinary manner. "I knew your father, my Baron," said she; "he was a fine man, but a bon vivant. I have heard say that the son should resemble the father; and though we ought to honour the tree which has lent us its shade, yet I must say that you might follow a better example. Now, now, your father reformed in his latter years; and I hope that the son will do so, and think about a good marriage in time. In doing so you would act

prudently, my Baron ; for the proverb says—‘ Early wooing brings no man rueing,’ and ‘ Better one cake with peace than two with strife.’ ”

Stellan looked quite astonished and somewhat irritated by this unexpected lecture. Ma chère mère did not seem to be in a particularly peaceful humour, and when we looked round us we found the whole house entangled in strife. Ma chère mère and Jean Jacques had fallen out on account of the new arrangements he wished to introduce on the estate, and the old abuses which he wished to reform. The strife between the old and the new had broken out at Carlsfors. But Ma chère mère held the reins of government fast in her hand ; and Jean Jacques, compelled to yield, found with reason his situation at Carlsfors highly disagreeable. Of all these things he complained to my Bear. Jane Marie was in open feud with Ebba, and related to me in a bitter tone all the injustice which she had to bear, which all consisted in so many trifles as compelled me rather to laugh than to cry over them : for it is quite as laughable as lamentable when people who might live without troubles, embitter each other’s existence by a multitude of unnecessary, self-created entanglements. I endeavoured cautiously to make Jane Marie aware of this, but some way it was unseasonable. Jane Marie grew excited to think that any one considered those things trifles which so nearly concerned her dignity ; and gave me to understand that she was quite capable of deciding what, in this whole affair, was of importance, and what was not.

I had quite determined not again to let it be grey between myself and Jane Marie ; and more than this, just now I felt a necessity for union ; so without any regard to her dignified words and air, I merely replied, “ Yes, certainly, dear Jane Marie, your education, your understanding, place you high enough over Ebba for you to have forbearance with her childish folly, without abusing your goodness.”

“ You do not know Ebba,” replied she, somewhat calmer ; “ she is full of self-love, pretension, and haughtiness. She would soon set me down if I did not carry a high hand towards her.”

There was a time when I believed that every person possessed in himself a preponderating fund of equity and

sound reason ; when I believed that they desired nothing so much as to be enlightened ; that if they only heard the truth, they must acknowledge it ; and that when they had acknowledged it they would correct their faults, and in consequence of this become contented and happy. At that time I spoke the truth to many, spared good counsel to none, and willingly became the peacemaker in quarrels ; but I very seldom found that I was thus able to do a service to any one, least of all to myself. And to be truly candid, reciprocal service of this kind, which some of my good friends have done for me, has especially tended to convince me that the too candid method in such cases is not the best by any means. In latter years I have been remarkably circumspect in speaking out my mind to people ; have been very sparing in giving good advice ; and have had a salutary fear of rushing into quarrels as peacemaker, or, in other words, "sitting between." But if, without any fault of my own, I do get into this melancholy predicament, I then close my heart with a sigh, endeavour to do my best, and make use of the experience which I have gained through my former unfortunate attempts. On this account, I did not now say to Jane Marie, "My good Jane Marie, you yourself are haughty, and full of pretensions. Precisely your own faults is it which call forth those of Ebba. If you were more reasonable in your behaviour, she would be less overbearing in hers!" I spoke out none of these thoughts of my heart, but merely sighed and said, "The poor child ! she has certainly had a faulty education. Those who have been better trained must excuse her. A defective education is a positive misfortune."

"Yes, a positive misfortune," chimed in Jane Marie, as it seemed with milder feeling towards Ebba.

But with Ma chère mère also was Jane Marie wholly dissatisfied.

The day before, Ma chère mère had the horses put to her carriage, and had said to Jane Marie and Ebba, "One of you can accompany me." As the carriage stood before the door, and Ma chère mère had already been long seated in it, came at the same moment Jane Marie and Ebba with the intention of going with her. There was room but for one of them by the side of Ma chère mère ; both wished for the drive. As now on the steps of the carriage a very violent dispute arose

between the sisters-in-law, Ma chère mère suddenly gave the whip to her horses, and drove off alone in the heavenly-carriage, to the great displeasure and astonishment of the disputants.

Walking in the park by Ebba's side—for Ebba, since her morning promenade, has become a great lover of the country—I heard afterwards all her complaints against Jane Marie. Jane Marie had such unbearably lofty manners towards Ebba; Jane Marie had called her a little fool; Jane Marie would alway be the first, would always go first through a door; would always be first served at table; Jane Marie would have everything better, more magnificent than Ebba! called Ebba's dress and ornaments common and of simple taste; always saw faults in her, and in all that she possessed, whilst she exalted her own possessions, and instanced them as distinguished and excellent. Poor Ebba bewailed over this. Also I bewailed it, only in another manner.

We were standing now on the edge of a flowing water, whose shore was richly adorned with leaves and flowers. All around us was beautiful, fresh, still. My very heart was warmed by it, and I felt that I could speak to Ebba in quite another way than to Jane Marie. I threw my arm therefore suddenly round her, and said, "Dear Ebba, would you be happy?"

"Yes, certainly," answered she, looking at me amazed.

"Ah, my beloved Ebba," continued I, warmly, "then rivet not yourself to such trifles, and do not let them annoy you. See how glorious and beautiful it is here all around you! and you have not rejoiced in these things, have scarcely observed them, because Jane Marie has carried herself more loftily, and has more costly things than you! My dear Ebba, is it not lamentable that we should spoil all the good and beautiful which life offers us through things like these?"

To repeat all that I said in my zeal would be to go too far; it is enough that I found a willing ear in Ebba, and that I described to her the folly of such contentions, and the pang of bitterness which they produce, so that Ebba both laughed and cried over it. She promised on my behalf to concede in peace all that precedence to Jane Marie after which she strove.

In the mean time, Bear on his side had to "sit between

Ma chère mère and Jean Jacques : he had through his influence arranged it so that Jean Jacques promised for the future to be less precipitate in overwhelming Ma chère mère with his new reformed systems, and she had conceded that she would take Jean Jacques's propositions into consideration.

And during all this time what did Cousin Stellan do ? He busied himself with those who were at peace ; made himself agreeable to all the ladies, one after another, excepting to me, and succeeded perfectly in pleasing all right well, not even excepting Ma chère mère, who asserted to me, "Heavens ! he is truly polite, the Baron S. He did justice to his dinner. He is a sensible young man!"

I rejoiced during the evening over Ebba, for she kept her promise excellently, and instead of making Jane Marie's beloved privilege a cause of strife, she prevented it several times. Jane Marie, at first, looked as if some stratagem of war must be concealed under this behaviour, but at last, convinced of the friendly sincerity of Ebba, she also became quite changed, and descended from her "high horses."

We foolish human beings ! How we torment ourselves and others ! and yet could often so easily change that picture of discontent and disquiet into a picture of peace and rest !

When Bear and I were again at home, we detailed mutually our commissions, and how we both had been called upon to "sit between," and we felt with joy that never, in this sense of the word, should it be necessary for any one to come and to "sit between us."

I have at this moment received the news of aunt Ulla's death. My good Maria ! I cannot say otherwise than "it is good !" especially since I hear how happily she died. Aunt Sophie, who writes me this news, adds, "Anne Maria can now remove into her chamber, which is so much more cheerful and convenient than the one she has been obliged to put up with."

There are people, harmless, peaceable people, whose departure is good, more particularly because they make room. This thought saddens me ! Oh, if I should ever come to be in the way of my neighbours ; if any one amongst them should ever long for my place,—then will I forth—forth !

Here am I now, sitting and weeping over this fancy, and over the thought of my ten daughters.

CHAPTER VII.

Rosenvik, July 18th.

YESTERDAY, Serena and I began our singing-lessons. At ten o'clock in the forenoon a pretty little horse, bearing a light graceful burden, came cantering up to my door. A heavy calesche, antique as its possessors, rolled up after the Amazon with the Patriarchs. I was glad to see that venerable pair under my roof, and delighted to receive and to keep Serena, who seemed animated by the ride and the beauty of the morning, and already to breathe a fresh life.

I had a little breakfast in readiness, and my eggs, my fresh butter and foaming chocolate, were praised no little. After the good old people had breakfasted and taken a view of Rosenvik, they returned, and I kept Serena with me for the day. I was imperative that she should not be fetched till nine in the evening, and this was promised me. The good old people tenderly embraced their favourite, who accompanied them to their carriage with a thousand graceful attentions.

After this we had a singing-lesson. Serena's voice is weak, but a fine counter-tenor. Our practice was principally of the voice and the reading the notes, for her expression and execution are truly excellent. This her own soul, her own taste, has taught her better than any master could have been able to do.

It grieved me to call Serena *Miss*. She belongs to that class of beings with whom I seem driven by an irresistible impulse to use the pleasing monosyllable *thou*. I asked to be permitted to do so; and asked further, that she would call me *aunt*, as my seniority appeared to demand some mark of respect, although this title is the most wearisome which I know. Serena laughed and refused to honour me on account of my years, and prayed me, if there were no other impediment, to be permitted to say *thou* also to me. I gladly assented; and found, to my astonishment, that I was only four years older than Serena. Serena is three-and-twenty, but the beauty of her complexion and figure would not lead one to suppose so.

After we had arranged these affairs—laugh not; that *thou*

and *thou* is in Sweden an important moment in an acquaintance; a great step forward, sometimes also backward—we took our work, went out and seated ourselves upon a bench in the shade of the lime and lilac hedge. Serena, whose fingers have an extraordinary skill in many delicate works, had plucked some flowers, and now set herself to imitate with great accuracy their seed-vessels and other minute parts.

Cousin Stellan had gone early in the morning out on a shooting excursion with the brothers Stålmark. I was glad to be alone with Serena. I was curious to hear her speak of Bruno, and soon turned the conversation upon him.

At the mention of his name she sighed; and when I questioned if she thought he had a bad heart, she replied warmly, "No, certainly not! His heart, indeed, must have been good and tender, how otherwise would he have been so kind towards me, who was only a weak and sickly child, and must have been burdensome to others. Is not that Ramm on the other side the lake? I remember yet so well, how Bruno led me about in the woods or drew me in my little carriage. The first impressions which I received of the beauty of life and of nature, were from this time. I yet remember, how the murmuring in the wood delighted me; and how I was enchanted with the flowers which he gathered for me. If he sang I sang too, and when he bore me in his arms, and sprang over the mountain ravines, I felt no fear, but only a little shudder, which was more akin to pleasure than to pain. He was never impatient or unfriendly towards me, and I shall never forget how once, as he was about to beat one of his brothers, he desisted when I wept and called him by his name. Why should he have been so gentle towards me, if his heart had not been good and amiable? Once also he saved my life not without peril of his own. It was in the park at Ramm. Starlings had built in an oak-tree, and in childish folly I desired to possess the eggs. Bruno seated me in the grass and climbed into the tree, from the topmost boughs of which, however, he precipitated himself on hearing me utter a cry for help, and with a shriek of horror snatched from my neck a snake which had wreathed itself there. I saw him strangle the snake and tread upon its head. Then taking me in his arms, I remember yet that he wept, whilst

I tried to pacify him with my childish caresses! Ah! depend upon it that he was not wisely treated. They certainly had not sufficient regard to his ability of loving. Had they, he would have caused his mother no anxiety, and would not have fled from his home and his fatherland!"

"Do you yet remember his appearance?" I inquired.

"Not clearly; it seems to me as if I saw, through a mist, a handsome, rosy-cheeked boy, with large beautiful eyes. But if I try to make the image more distinct, it fades."

"And what do you suppose occasioned his flight from home?" I inquired.

"I have been told," said Serena, "that dissension with his mother, and severe treatment on her side, occasioned it. There was great similarity in their tempers. They opposed obstinacy to obstinacy—force to force. Bruno must have died in his exile. Poor Bruno! I have truly lamented his fate. He was so good to me!" Serena sighed with a mournful expression of countenance; and I also was penetrated by a sentiment of deep sadness.

I changed the conversation to other persons. I spoke of Serena's grandparents, and as I praised them she became cheerful and joyous. The sentiment of gratitude seemed especially to prevail in her heart to an uncommon degree. It seems as if of all recollections she preserves only those which incite to love. If she spoke of a book also, it was with an acknowledgment of the good she had derived from it. And then how natural and graceful is every word, in short her whole being! I loved her; she did me good. I wished that I also could be inscribed on a leaf of her remembrance-book.

At dinner we had—Bear—good humour, good appetite, and—without boasting—good eating. In the afternoon Cousin Stellan came back in the condition which I generally expect after a shooting excursion, namely, savagely hungry and without game.

When we had sate and talked pleasantly for an hour after coffee, we determined to make an excursion to Svanö, there to eat our evening meal. Serena and I cut bread and butter; filled some bottles with cold punch, and laid these, together with a piece of cold roast meat, in a basket; and with this our cheerful little company wandered down to the shore,

where a prettily painted green boat received us. Stellan rowed. A light wind cooled us and curled the water. Serena and I sang "La Biondina." Thus reached we the appointed place. We threw ourselves down on a grassy mound, in the red and white clover, under the great oak-tree. I between my husband and the basket of provisions ; Stellan by Serena ; and as I saw them sitting there in the green grass, so lovely and so cheerful, weaving flower garlands for each other, the transient, perhaps sinful, thought rose in my heart of a possible union between those two.

Bear, lying on the fresh odorous turf, smoked his pipe, and slowly puffed out the volumes of smoke towards the blue heaven, whilst he listened to God knows what foolish nonsense about the great Mogul which his wife told him.

Anon, the air seemed suddenly tremulous, and a rush as of a far-off tempest of melody reached our ears. This tone—solemn, gloomy, but beautiful—made an extraordinary impression upon us. We were all still and listened. For a moment all was hushed, a breeze passed by again, and upon this breeze came again a tremulous, mournful, but inex-pressibly harmonious tone, which oppressed me to the heart.

"It is the organ at Ramm!" I exclaimed ; "the wind bears the sound to us. O that we could hear it nearer! Hush! hush! it comes nearer."

We listened. The melodious panting sound came again and again, with every flying wind that came towards us from Ramm. But we could not connect together a whole ; the trembling tones mounted and died away like the sighings of a sorrowful spirit, and as I listened to them I felt as many an inquirer of the old times must have felt when he pondered on the broken and incomprehensible melodies of Being, and believed that the wind of Fate played upon the strings of the Eolian harp of life. A longing took possession of me, an agony, which those only can understand who experience, like me, a passion for music and for coherence.

"I must hear this nearer!" exclaimed I with decision. "Serena, we two will row towards Ramm, and obtain a clear idea of this music. I shall become mad if I hear these tones without their intelligence. Remain lying there, dear Bear, and smoke your pipe in peace. I pray let us go. Remair

you there, Cousin Stellan ; we wish to be alone, Serena and I. We shall soon be back again."

The gentlemen looked dissatisfied ; Bear continued to lie on the grass, and grumble ; Stellan accompanied us to the boat ; Serena and I set off quite joyous and ardent. I rowed the little boat easily. The little voyage was enchanting to me, for the nearer we approached the more significant became the music. To me it seemed as if the boat sped of itself, as if invisible powers drew us onwards towards that wonderful music. The evening was calm ; the sunbeams trembled into ever darker gold through the wood ; higher ever rose the melodious tempest. We two, Serena and I, experienced an elevated delight, although in a different manner. My heart beat violently, and tears of rapture filled my eyes. Serena was calmer ; her white hand played with the waves, and her clear beautiful eyes looked around with quiet childlike goodness, yet with an expression of pure delight.

Both of us remained silent ; but eager to hear more distinctly that captivating music, we approached nearer and nearer to Ramm. What shall I say to you ? Mrs. Curiosity had such a power in the boat and over me, that in vain raised itself the warning voice of Serena, and ever nearer and nearer floated the boat to the dark walls of Ramm, and at last lay still as a smuggler's-craft, in the shadow of the alder-bushes close under an open window.

Here heard we, in tones that seemed to come from no human hand, the favourite melody of the Neck's* dance, an interweaving of rich melodies which for beauty and power surpassed all that I had ever heard or imagined before. They were the evident children of a mighty inspiration. Enraptured, and carried away as it were, I bowed my head in my hand, and dreamed that the king of the sea, inspired by the beauty of the evening and of nature, made known to us himself, his wonderful life ; that life which he leads in the mysterious depths, and in the crystal castles of the ocean. But all at once the tones ceased, and I woke out of my dream to a consciousness of the present. I seized the oar involuntarily, and with one little stroke turned the boat away from the

* A water-spirit.

shore, and as involuntarily both Serena and I turned our eyes to the open window above, but turned them hastily away again, for there stood the dark Romilly, in his own gloomy person, with his eyes fixed upon us. We blushed, took each an oar, and returned in much shorter time, I fancy, than we went, although our oars had now to keep time without the accompaniment of the music. This had entirely ceased.

In the meanwhile, as we had been absent nearly two hours, Cousin Stellan seemed to be quite sleepy. Bear not quite as good-tempered as we had left him, which did not astonish me; but, however, he was soon perfectly right again on my heartily praying for forgiveness. I feel at times a certain degree of pleasure in sinning, and then in obtaining dispensation by caresses.

We ate our evening meal in quiet and cheerfulness; but Serena, who began to think of her old relatives, and expected to be sent for, often turned her eyes towards Rosenvik.

The carriage arrived almost at the moment when our boat reached the shore, and Serena left us after we had agreed that the next singing-lesson should be on Friday. Cousin Stellan attended her to the carriage, and showed her many polite attentions. It is remarkable how becoming all such are to a young man.

"Come right soon again," cried I after Serena; and her friendly blue eyes smiling an assent from under her little straw hat, she waved an adieu with her hand, and vanished between the green trees.

"That was a charming girl," said Stellan, who waited for me in the porch, "only it is a pity she is rather lame."

"To you, Cousin Stellan," said I smiling, "everything in this world limps."

"But I must confess," returned he, "that I have hardly ever seen a less fault in a lady."

"I agree with you, Cousin," returned I; "and I can even believe it possible that under certain circumstances such a fault as this may be seen only as real beauty."

He smiled and made a motion with the head, as though he might think so too. I was about to enter when Stellan stopped me, and with a deep earnestness in his voice, said, "for the last few days, Fransiska, you have not been so

friendly towards me as you were. Have I grieved you in any way?"

"Yes," answered I frankly, "by very nearly convincing me that you cared nothing for my esteem, and that grieved me."

"Forgive me," said Stellan kindly, but gravely, "and think yet well of me. I could not willingly live without your esteem, Fransiska. Give me your hand upon it, that you believe me and forgive me."

"There," said I, giving him my hand joyfully, but taking care that he did not kiss it; and went in to my Bear, satisfied to have Stellan's esteem instead of his courtesy, and somewhat satisfied also with myself.

To-morrow Ma chère mère has a great dinner-party. The whole neighbourhood will be assembled at Carlsfors. Mr. de Romilly also has been invited, although he had paid no visit there. I am very curious to see again this enigmatical person. His music has prepossessed me in his favour. He who can awaken such melodies must possess deep and strong sentiment.

18th.

I was disappointed in my hope of being able to observe more closely the gloomy neighbour at Ramm. He came, it is true, to Carlsfors, and his entrance made a great sensation. For myself, an unpleasant feeling passed through me as I glanced at the lofty black-apparelled figure, which in entering drew together the fierce eyebrows with an almost threatening expression.

Ma chère mère, who was *en grande toilette*, and really looked very well, approached him majestically, and made an oration to him in French, which was equally polite and stately; but which, however, the stranger seemed to understand no more than if it had been Laplandish. He stood immovable, with downcast eyes; and when Ma chère mère had ended, returned in a low voice, a few words which were inaudible to me; bowed very low, and left her. I fancy Ma chère mère was but little edified by the foreign politeness which she had praised so much before; and, as if she had been infected by De Romilly's mood, she too contracted her eyebrows, and returned to her seat.

The next moment an extraordinary commotion took place

at the end of the room. The gentlemen rushed together and as the group opened itself again, De Romilly was seen pale as death and almost insensible, supported by two persons, and about to leave the room. Bear attended him out, and Ma chère mère ordered whatever the house contained to be at his service. After a few minutes, taking me with her, she went out to him herself.

Mr. de Romilly, who sate in a corner of the sofa, seemed then to have recovered himself, but his face was concealed by his pocket handkerchief. Upon Ma chère mère questioning him most kindly, he replied, in a hollow voice, complained of violent headache, that he found himself compelled to leave the house, since his indisposition would render him totally unfit for company. Ma chère mère said everything which a polite hostess could say on such an occasion. The stranger only bowed his head in silent acknowledgment ; and we left him, after Ma chère mère had recommended him to Bear's care ; soon after we heard him drive off.

Now for a few words on the pleasures of the day.

I will commence by passing over the dinner, which, like all other great dinners, was rather heavy. Ma chère mère was not in one of her most brilliant humours, which affected us all. Therefore to the afternoon.

Mrs. von P. had, at her entrance, given me only a gracious little nod of the head, and after this she concerned herself no farther with me. On the contrary, she was very friendly with Jane Marie.

Jane Marie played her heavy piece from Herz. It is her "cheval de bataille," and that it is warlike one must acknowledge, as well as that it was performed excellently. The moment it was finished, Mrs. von P. hastened to her, and exclaimed "Charmant ! charmant ! None but our modern composers can write thus. What effect ! what colouring ! Oh ! Weber is whimsical, Rossini often poor in melody, but Meyerbeer excels both; he is, as one may say, 'le prince de la musique.'"

"The piece which I have just played was from Herz," returned Jane Marie, somewhat drily.

"Yes, he is excellent ! excellent !" repeated Mrs. von P. "My dear Baroness, art it is alone which exalts men above brutes. Education is the truest aristocracy, which equalizes

all differences in rank and wealth among men. We live, truly, in an enlightened age."

The Misses Adele and Julia had hastened up to Serena, and with affected sprightliness, and in fine ornamental voices were saying, "Ah! how pleasant it is to see you, little Serena! How are you now, little Serena? Have you always now pain in your hip, poor little Serena?"

Roguishly smiling, Serena replied, "I thank you, my good ones, but it is above fifteen years now since I had any pain."

"No, really! Heavens! I fancied you were always ill, you look so pale,—but then that's the fault of your dress. What material is it? What old-world Laventine! Heavens! you are quite old-fashioned, little Serena! quite behindhand."

"I am not just come from Paris," said Serena, with all that cheerful goodness which removes bitterness from her own heart, as well as from that of others. She then observed the dresses of the censorious young ladies, admired them, questioned them about Paris, and listened with evident pleasure to all that they could relate to her. The two sisters seemed to me to become more agreeable whilst they conversed with Serena.

Cousin Stellan passed about from one to another; had at first a lively conversation with Miss von P., which seemed soon to weary him; then turned to the brothers Stålmark, who had seated themselves down in a corner of the room, with other gentlemen, to talk about dogs and horses; steered away then to several landed-proprietors, who were talking over together the brandy monopoly. As he made his way from these, he was snapped up by Mrs. von P., and on account of his sins was he doomed to hear her expatiate on art and education. At length he tore himself from her, and made halt by Serena, in whose graceful society he seemed to feel himself right.

In the mean time, I took a lesson from my friend Brita Kajsa, on housewifery and maid-servants; but becoming sleepy therefrom, I sought out the Patriarchs, with whom I endeavoured to accomplish my great work—the having Serena with me for fourteen days at Rosenvik. It did not seem impossible that I should succeed. Long live eloquence!

Miss Hellevi Husgafvel was prevented by a previous en-

gagement from being at the great Carlsfors feast. This circumstance, Ma chère mère's serious humour, and the great heat without and within, caused there to be no particular life in the company.

When Serena had left, with her grandparents, which was very early, it grew heavier and heavier; and I was glad when I was once more seated in the cabriolet by my own Bear, on the way to our delightful Rosenvik.

19th.

Oh, the violent, hideous, cruel, detestable!—you shall hear whom.

Cousin Stellan was gone yesterday afternoon into the town to pay a visit to the Dahls. Bear and I rejoiced to be alone. He had brought out his tools; I had drawn my little work-table to the sofa, and just opened the third part of the "Watch Tower in Koatven," which I was reading aloud. That book is to me horrible: the only good lesson which it seems to me people can derive from it—I have skimmed it through to the end—is to feel what a moral extravagance the life of many people and many things in this world would present, if we did not cast our glance to the solving of the great riddle, to the sequel of the history on the other side of the grave. For my part, I would gladly throw the book into the fire; but Bear insists that we should finish it. I fancy all the grislynesses of the book give him pleasure.

At the very moment, however, when I was about to begin reading, I glanced through the window. The leaves of the lilach bushes whispered in the wind, the swans moved their white wings, clouds collected softly towards the west, and it seemed to me as if all beckoned and whispered, "come out! come out!" and an indescribable desire impelled me into the fresh air and greenness. I seized Bear by the ear, and whispered my wishes. He grumbled a little, stretched himself, and then after a few moments stood up and took his hat. The good Bear!

I soon put on my bonnet and shawl, and took my Bear's arm. The moment we were about to pass through the door, he looked around with a peculiar long glance as if he had forgotten something, and I, for I know very well the meaning of all his looks, sprang in immediately, took his pipe, filled it myself, struck fire and lighted it, to Bear's great delight.

Bear had a wish to go and look about in the park at Ramm. We procured a rower, and very cool and pleasant was it to sail there across that peaceful lake. Bear puffed in long volumes the smoke from his pipe; I sang little barcaroles; and sailing on unconsciously about a mile and a half, struck upon the land by the shadowy shore of Ramm. We landed tolerably far from the house, and then arm in arm went into the gloomy, beautiful park. I felt myself happy; happy to be wandering on Bear's arm in the still wood; to feel how the fresh delicious air played on my face; to know my Bear to be so good, and to see the heaven above us so clear. Also he was happy, to be wandering with his wife amid the remembrances of his childhood. He looked around him, breathed deeply, and said in a low voice, while he pressed my arm to him, "How glorious!" And know, my Maria, if Bear says *one* word, it has more weight than a hundred out of the mouth of another.

So wandered we deeper and deeper into the wood. The high thick-leaved trees; the shade, the silence, the recollections which seemed to abide under these shades, the loneliness, and the image of the gloomy hermit of Ramm, which involuntarily stood there like the Genius of the place; all combined to produce in us a solemnity of mood. But as we slowly wandered onward we heard, at first dull, then more distinctly, a treading and stamping as of a wild horse which some one was endeavouring, but in vain, to master. I have no great fancy for unbroken horses; but Bear must have had, for he hastened his steps towards the place from whence the noise proceeded. We advanced to an open space, and there making halt were fascinated by the wild but fine spectacle.

The same man and the same horse which we had seen once before wandering together in such Idyllian peace, we here beheld again; but now in violent contest. The man sate commandingly on the back of the horse, which he would compel to leap over a broad ditch. The beautiful creature trembled and backed. It threw itself to the left and to the right; it pawed, it would not take the leap. The foam flowed from its black and shining body. But like an intrepid, despotic will, the man sate firm, admonishing, punishing compelling.

The noble animal developed in this wild strife the whole beauty of his race. His eyes sparkled, his wide outspread nostrils seemed to spout forth fire, while he struck the earth with his hoofs, and with a hundred leaps sought to escape that one leap which he was urged to. With unexampled skill sat the rider firm, and moved himself with the motions of the horse, whose master he endeavoured to become ; and ever again was the refractory animal brought to the same spot. The same demand was made, and ever again began the same contest. Thus certainly for an hour did the two strive together. The horse then appeared weary ; became still, but made no attempt to obey the will of his master. The blood ran down his spur-fretted sides. The man dismounted and threw the bridle loose. The horse stood quiet and looked at him. He took something from his breast-pocket, held it to the forehead of the horse. "It is the third time we have striven," said he sullenly, "farewell !"

There was a flash before the forehead of the horse, a shot was fired, and the steed fell at the feet of his master. We saw it stretch forth its head when dying as if for a caress ; we heard a dull groan ; then all was still !

With a violence which I had never seen before in Bear he pressed my arm to him, struck his clenched fist to his brow, and drawing back, exclaimed to himself, "It is Bruno ! Lord, my God ! yes, it is he !"

"It is Satan, Satan himself !" cried I, greatly excited. "Oh, Bear, let us go ! go far from this horrible man. I will not see him again !"

"It was Bruno !" repeated Bear, as we re-entered the wood. "Where was I, that I did not sooner—But now he was so like himself—wild, unmanageably wild, at every opposition—and that expression of brow and mouth ! Bruno alive ! Bruno here ?"

"I wish he were far enough from here," said I, vehemently. "He is a fearful man, and he will murder us all if we do not all the madnesses which he will require from us."

I was violently agitated, and was obliged to sit down. Bear also was pale, and repeated, with a mixture of disquiet, joy, and pain, "Bruno here again ! Bruno here ! What—what will his mother say ?"

"Ah she will let him go again! I wish he were in Botany Bay, to which place he belongs."

"You should not wish so, Fanny," said Bear; "Bruno is not bad. He has his wild moments; but if he be the least like what he was, he has also his good ones. Mildness and love may work infinitely upon him. Even his coming back, his residence here, speak in favour of his heart." Seldom had Bear spoken with so much fervour.

"And what will now be done?" asked I, full of disquiet.

"He must be reconciled with his mother; he must remain amongst us," replied my husband.

"The bandit! the murderer!"

"We shall see, we shall see," said Bear.

"We will go away from here, otherwise he will shoot even us because we stand in his way," said I. "Oh, let us go back to our little peaceful Rosenvik!"

We did so. It seemed to me as if I came from a tempestuous sea, so much was I disturbed and disquieted.

When we came back to our home, we—that is, myself—talked backwards and forwards of that which had happened, of what could be done, and of what would happen. Bear went with his hands behind him up and down the room, spitting right and left, and exclaiming musingly, "Hum! hum!"

At length we became unanimous that nothing further was to be done than to keep the discovery which we had made secret, and await the time.

Bear slept not a wink this night, neither did I; but towards morning I dozed, and dreamed that Bruno had struck a dagger into the heart of his mother. I heard her thrilling cry, "My blood! my own flesh and blood!" and saw her sink into a deep abyss. When I awoke I was so agitated that I burst into tears. And yet once more I must give vent to my feelings, and exclaim, out of the depths of my heart, "Oh, the violent, hateful, cruel, abominable man!"

20th.

No; I cannot detest him yet. Bruno has a heart, although he is cruel to horses.

Yesterday evening he came to us, and my heart opposed itself against him like a wild horse, and I could not speak a friendly word to him. The visit began with an almost gen-

ral silence ; but I looked at Bear, and I saw that his brother's heart yearned towards him, and could not longer contain itself.

Cousin Stellan had just begun to read to us aloud a part of "The Jew" of Spindler, which he admired as a masterpiece among works of horror. Bruno's arrival interrupted the reading, and a few moments afterwards Stellan laid down the book. Bruno perceived this, and begged that if we were engaged in reading that he might be permitted to be one of the auditors. Cousin Stellan therefore explained to him shortly that of which this part of the book treated ; and how the Jew Zodik had been baptised to a religion which he detested, by criminal means, and through the cruellest act of power of a Christian Knight, and then on this very account had been barbarously jested and sneered at by the knight himself ; how under these circumstances the most terrible despair took possession of his soul ; he felt himself cast out of heaven and earth.

"Every paradise is closed against me ! Must I then be lost ?—Cursed Christian ! You have stolen my soul from me ! I curse you ! I vow revenge upon you ; retributive revenge !" Here was it that Stellan had left off reading, here continued he : "These thoughts animated the unhappy one, torn with doubt and despondency, with a spark which proceeded not from heaven but from the deep. Zodik collected together his thoughts, and with streaming hair glared wildly up to the jagged clouds, which sent down in vain their thickest snow-flakes to cool that raging Moloch image. 'The bond is rent !' yelled he forth, the only living being under the still icy rain. 'Samiel, prince of the wilderness, prince of death, and consort of the horrible night-queen Lilis, the mother of fearful ghosts and of all sins,—to thee I resign myself ! Defend me from the anger of our God ! Conceal me from the wrath of Edom ! Teach me to bear the sword against that law which is mine no longer ! Permit me to take vengeance on Israel as well as on Esau, till thou takest home my soul in the tempest of thy wrath !'"

The narrative relates further how Zodik hardened himself in hellish sentiments. He became calmer ; he conceived that it was permitted on earth to the lost-one to live two-fold, in his own joys and in the sufferings of others. He

declared all men outlawed; and, drunken with a savage joy from the horrible pictures which ascended in his soul, he thanked Fate for the occasion which had lent him power to quench his thirst for revenge, and to become the enemy of the whole human race.

"That is horrible," said I, as Stellan ceased reading; "but is it natural? is it true? Is it not one of the terror-pictures which the romances of our age conjure forth, but which have no counterpart in reality? Crimes and criminals I can conceive; but not an obdurate man-hater; not a devil in human form."

Cousin Stellan shrugged his shoulders. "At all events," said he, "the representation is successful and full of effect."

"And precisely because it is quite natural, quite true," said Bruno, emphatically. "The sinner must become a devil if he has no more hope."

"And who need be without hope?" asked Bear, with the confidence which becomes a pure heart so well. "Who cannot, yes! who ought not to hope?"

"Can you cast the burden of pain or of remorse from a human breast, so that it may open itself to hope?" inquired Bruno in a tone of reproof. "Can you prevent passion from shattering and embittering? To hope? Then take out of the world punishment ten times severer than the crime deserves—then take out of the soul words which once spoken burn there for ever!"

Stellan here was called out by the Brothers Stålmark, who, in hunting dress and followed by a pack of dogs, crossed the court. He was, or rather he wished to be, eager for the chase, and left us. Thus he did not hear how I, burning in soul against Bruno, on account of his horse and various other causes, answered him somewhat bitterly.

"If you remove haughtiness—if you remove anger and evil passions out of the soul of man, then you will see that punishment improves, and that misfortune purifies and leads to humility and hope."

"Punishment!" exclaimed Bruno with mournful warmth "believe me there are sins which punishment cannot reform. There are natures whom severity only hardens. They plunge themselves only deeper upon the sword which is sheathed in their breast. Would you save a criminal of this kind from

eternal perdition, would you change the heart in his breast? then reach to him the hand of love, forgive him, even if he do not deserve forgiveness; but repel him not, cast him not off! A heart may vibrate long between good and evil; it may be long before it can be saved—but the hour comes when it may be hardened for ever. If," continued he, "the only bosom after which it longs in this world close itself against him, then is every paradise of life closed against him! If one horrible unappeasable remembrance comes, and comes again for ever, night and day, every hour, every moment, falls upon the soul like an ice shower, then—bitter, bitter, bitter!"

Bruno supported his forehead on his hand; he seemed to have forgotten us, and everything around him. The thunderbolt upon his forehead was spread out in sharp angles. After a few moments he looked up again with a flashing glance, and resumed,—“And under such circumstances shall a man reform himself, become good, and hope?” He laughed bitterly. “Ah, you good, happy people! go out into the world, visit the prisons, the galleys;—look into those hearts which wear heavier fetters than their bodies, and talk to them of reform! There are furies in life, in hearts—the legends of them in the old times are no invention—go out to those who are driven by the furies, and preach of hope—if you have courage to do so!”

“Yes, upon my soul!” cried Bear, stamping on the floor as if in anger, although his eyes were full of tears; “yes, I will preach of hope,—and this in prisons, by land and on sea. I will cry it in the ear of the dying malefactor,—will shout it even to the other side of death, to the other side of the grave;—I will cry into endless eternity, ‘hope, hope!’”

“He goes further far,” thought I to myself; “yet nevertheless he is right!” and I rejoiced over my Bear.

“Would you?” said Bruno slowly, his cheek blanching, while he supported his head with his hand—“would you also talk of hope to those who sustained the curse of father or mother?—and who had deserved it,” added he with an almost inarticulate voice.

“Yes, in the name of all the world!” cried Bear vehemently; “and wherefore,” continued he in a tone and with a manner which wholly bewildered me, “wherefore this doubt

and this Jeremiad, and these lamentable despairings, in a man and in a Christian? Why are you come to disturb us with these things?"

The blood mounted into Bruno's face; he cast an inquiring glance on his brother.

Bear looked quite ferocious and exasperated, as he exclaimed, "I acknowledge that it seems to me quite extraordinary that you come here as a stranger into my peaceful house, to disturb our quiet with your speeches about prisons, galleys, furies, and all kinds of hateful disputations which do not concern us."

Bruno, astonished, wounded, and proud, stood up and cast upon Bear his wonderful, penetrating, and flashing eyes. He then sunk them again, and said, in a voice which expressed both repressed pain and anger, "Have I disturbed your peace? I will not disturb it again! Farewell!" He bowed to me and moved towards the door. Bear followed him and spoke still louder—

"Yes, it appears to me quite extraordinary, inexplicable, and unpardonable, that you come as a stranger, and talk of despair, and irremediable misfortune; of repulsion, and that in"—here Bear laid his hand suddenly on Bruno's arm, as turning himself in the door, he cast upon him a look in which all the lightnings of the world seemed agitating his soul,— "and that in the house of a brother, which is your own house also, and before a friend who will do all for—for Bruno!—Yes, it is unpardonable!"

Bear held him in his arms, and pressed him to his honest breast. The storm dissolved away in tears of love; Bruno was beside himself; the colour changed in his countenance with a thousand contending emotions, at last all lost themselves in a sentiment of overwhelming tenderness. He pressed his brother warmly to his breast, kissed him, embraced him again, stammering out, "Brother!—brother!—Lars Anders!—can you yet remember me—will you acknowledge me, and love me as before?"

"Silence!" howled Bear, almost inarticulate with crying, "silence with your stupid questions! Come, here is my wife! We both are one, embrace her!"

I confess that the image of the dying horse had quite vanished out of my mind. I sat there and wept at the

embracing of the brothers, and when Bruno approached me I presented to him my cheek. He kissed my hand also, and embraced Bear again. That warm loving heart glanced from his eyes, and from his whole being. I loved him right well at this moment.

We had scarcely begun in some measure to compose ourselves, when we heard Cousin Stellan unexpectedly returning. "Secret!" said Bruno, in a low emphatic voice. Again we seated ourselves, as quietly and with as much indifference as possible.

After Stellan's entrance, Bruno remained for a long time silent; at length said he, "One of my people at Ramm is dangerously ill. Could I beg Dr. Werner to visit him? I should prefer this evening, or perhaps to-morrow."

"I should prefer this evening, returned Bear. The earlier the better, before it be too late."

They made themselves, therefore, immediately ready to depart; and, as Bear took leave, he whispered to me to be quite easy, even if he did not return till late in the night.

I remained alone with Stellan, who might find me the most wearisome companion in the world, for my thoughts were far from him; and although he spoke much of Serena, I remained silent and absent.

Bear did not return home till midnight, and see here pretty much what he related.

It appears from Bruno's papers, as well as from his own account, that he was some time in the Portuguese service. After the conclusion of the peace, he took his leave and voyaged to the West Indies; where, in partnership with a planter, he amassed his fortune by trade. He became rich; passed many years, partly in the plantations, and partly in travelling; he led a much-employed and active life; but a longing after his native land, the desire to be reconciled to his mother, took every stronger possession of his soul, and at last acquired such height, that life lost all worth for him. He determined to make the attempt, whether or not he could free himself from the curse which pursued him like furies; and thus, under an assumed name, he had travelled to Sweden, and had come to Ramm. Here he sought intelligence of his mother's state of mind, learned her condition after his flight; and how, since then, she had removed from

about her all remembrances of him, and that she was still unable to hear his name spoken; and the wildest despair had taken hold of his soul. It appeared to torture Bruno to speak on the subject, and he interrupted himself, with the words, "Nevertheless, an attempt must be made—when, I know not. Let us now speak no more about it!"

If this attempt succeed, he will bring his great wealth to Sweden, purchase Ramm, and settle himself down there. Succeed it not, he will return to the West Indies, and become as one dead to family and fatherland.

So stands it. How will it go on? "Hope!" Bear said to his brother, but still his knowledge of the character both of mother and son, make him uneasy as to the result. Yet, after all, Bear rejoices in his soul over the return of his brother; and, moreover, that he has found his heart to be as warm as ever.

"But did you say nothing to him about the horse?" asked I. "Certainly I did," he replied; "since I told him where, and by what means I had recognised him." Bruno coloured deeply, and said, "that was an unfortunate hour. I had resolved to make this very leap a prophecy of the result of my fate. I would that it should be taken. As the opposition could not be overcome, I was embittered—but that which I have done distresses me!"

"He is at least a man," exclaimed I, "although not a reasonable one!"

Ah, my good Maria! what will be the end of this? A ferocious, unreasonable son, an inflexible mother, who, also, has sparks of ferocity in her soul, and between them both such remembrances! How will it go on? What will be the end of it?

Bear himself, who talks so much about hope, does not look like hope. God help us all!

CHAPTER VIII.

Rosenvik, July 29th.

I HAVE been for several days so busy, so cheerful, so happy, that I have nearly forgotten disquiet, anxiety, the threatening future, and, pardon me, dear Maria, almost the pen itself. I have lived so much in the present, and have so

fully enjoyed it! I have had, and still have, Serena with me. My plans have succeeded. I tyrannised Bear, he tyrannised the Patriarchs, and I received Serena, with the permission to retain her with me a whole week, and perhaps longer.

How joyful was I the evening she came! It was to me as if I had received into my house a beloved younger sister, to whom I should be as a mother. How happy was I to set before her my eggs, my butter, my fresh-baked rye-bread, and to spread on her bed in the evening the dazzling white linen! We rose early in the morning, drank milk from Audumbla; went then into the birch wood, where Bear has made winding walks, so that it has the effect of a pleasure-ground. I have enjoyed with her air and flowers, and have seen her every day become healthier and lovelier. We have read together, worked together, sung together, and talked together, and all possesses with Serena a new and higher charm.

Wednesday evening was a tea and coffee party at Bird's Nest. A little festival, lively and gay as the hostess herself, and where body and soul were equally entertained. It is a charming thing to possess a museum.

On Friday it went festively at Doctor Werner's. Rosenvik cannot compare itself with Bird's Nest, but still it has, as Ma chère mère was pleased to assert of its mistress, its own little charm. As this was our first great party, I was a little uneasy about it, whether everything would go on quite well and as it should do, especially on Bear's account, for I wish him to be always satisfied with his wife.

Fortunately everything did succeed properly; the only misfortune was, that a few days before I had said to Bear that in this festival he should be treated to a sort of little sugar-cake which would actually melt in his mouth. Unluckily they all melted away in the oven, so that the mouth had not the least morsel of them to taste. For the rest, all went well, and our visitors were politely contented with all. Jane Marie played her heavy piece from Herz. I sang a little, and then everybody danced to the piano. All were gay.

When our company was gone, Bear and I walked up and down the room and rejoiced ourselves that all had gone off so well, and that people had found it so agreeable with us.

“And how good everybody found the lemonade!” said L

"And then the little sugar-cakes!" exclaimed Bear with a horrible grimace; "they really melted in one's mouth, so that one perceived nothing of them!"

Unlucky little sugar-cakes!

The happiest and the pleasantest days, however, we have spent alone at Rosenvik; and then every evening almost we eat our supper on Svanö. Cousin Stellan is "aux petits soins" for Serena! Now, now, Cousin Stellan!

We spent several evenings at Carlsfors. Ma chère mère since her misfortunes accepts no invitations. Ma chère mère is very friendly and kind to me; she addresses me almost always with *thou* and *child*, and when the understanding between us is very good, I call her mother, which seems to give her pleasure. But confidence does not exist between us, she does not invite to it, and that Berlichingenism in her somewhat shocks me.

On Saturday, Ebba left with her husband. I am sorry for it. I have actually become attached to her latterly. There is a deal which is naturally good in her, and with a prudent management on Peter's part it would develope itself more and more. The tears she shed at parting proved that I was not indifferent to her. We promised to write to each other.

2nd August.

I may yet keep Serena with me fourteen days longer! The good old Dahls came here yesterday. It was a joy to see how Serena flew into their arms, and how they embraced her in sincere affection. They rejoiced to see her blooming cheeks; to hear her progress in singing (I boast of her like the very best of aunts!); and they themselves persuaded the sweet girl to fall in with Bear's commands and my sincere wishes. Serena seems to feel it difficult to leave the old people, but consented at last to the prayers of all, and so I have yet fourteen happy days more.

Between Jane Marie and me all is again harmonious. It is always a pleasure to me to converse with her, and her musical talent is truly uncommon. She appears to me also to be much more agreeable since Ebba has left. The intercourse between these two could never be frindly. It is with certain persons as with certain stuffs. Each taken by itself

is very good, but when the two come together they put out each other, and they lose mutually in colour, Jane Marie also becomes more polite towards Ma chère mère, who on her side becomes more friendly to her, although she always keeps her at a certain distance, especially in housekeeping affairs.

Jane Marie has unquestionable merits as a wife, and she and Jean Jacques are excellently well satisfied with each other.

Till now I have only given you sunshine, now comes a cloud. This is called Bruno. Bruno is often here in an evening. I know not why, or from what cause, but I am always anxious when he comes; it seems to me as if an evil power dwelt in him, as if he in some way or other would occasion misfortune. The warm sunbeams which seemed to break forth from him as he saw himself acknowledged and embraced by his brother, have now vanished. The tempest-nature has again the upper hand, and Bruno is reserved and gloomy. Yet this extraordinary man has a mysterious influence over us all. I fear that Serena feels it deeper than I should wish, although I cannot say that decidedly. Bruno, on the contrary, seems to me evidently captivated by her. He observes her; he listens to all that she says, as people listen to music of which they will not lose one tone. Serena is kind and friendly to him, but so is she also to Stellan—to whom, indeed, is she not so? But then I have fancied that I have seen at times a certain bashfulness towards Bruno, which in her intercourse with Stellan I never perceived, and this is not a good sign. But perhaps this may be only a natural consequence of the dissimilar nature and dissimilar behaviour of these two men. Even I, in Bruno's company, am not quite self-possessed. Neither of the two exactly pleases me as a husband for Serena; but Stellan I prefer to Bruno.

5th August.

Aha! Cousin Stellan, is it so? What do you think now, dear Maria? Here now has our former despiser of marriages sate a whole hour and talked of the happiness of a well-assorted marriage, and of the pleasures and joys which domestic life must afford—and then came sighs and melancholy looks, and hints that he also held it for the highest

happiness to settle down domestically with an amiable accomplished wife. And I—I threw all his former difficulties in the way.

"But, Cousin Stellan, the sour paste? But Cousin Stellan, the wash-bucket? Your wife must have the house scoured! But, Cousin Stellan, that crying of children? All little children cry, even if they be descended from the best-educated parents. And that apple which is found in all families!" To all these Stellan had one answer, the substance of which was, that all earthly disagreeables, with a really prudent and agreeable wife, would be perceived only as a light cloud, which appears transiently in the heavens, and then is gone again. I cherished the same opinion exactly, and said so at length.

"Yes," said Stellan, "one first becomes perfectly aware of this when one meets with a person who gives by her beautiful harmonious nature a charm and grace to all that surrounds her. One feels then first, that they are the intrinsic qualities which fashion this outer world, and that the connexion between the two is governed by them."

"Yes, so it is, Cousin Stellan, and I confess that I have long anticipated this change in your views."

"How so?" asked Stellan, blushing.

"Confess that a person in our neighbourhood has particularly tended to your seeing marriage and domestic life in a brighter point of view."

"Hum!—yes, now, I cannot deny that," said he.

"I have seen it long," I observed. "I am not astonished, Cousin Stellan; you have not been able to see coolly Miss Hellevi Husgafvel and her Bird's Nest."

"What!—whom? how?" Cousin Stellan sprang up in confusion, and looked at me with terror. I could not help laughing. Stellan seemed hurt, and said, "You jest, Fransiska, and that is not right of you!"

"Pardon me, Stellan," I replied, "but confess that Bird's Nest possesses not the least of these disagreeables which you find so great; it never can smell there of sour paste, and certainly it is scoured only once a year; besides which, Miss Hellevi is a person with whom life never could be heavy and wearisome."

"God defend us!" exclaimed he; "her excessive sprighteliness would occasion me fever; in eight days I should die of Bird's Nest and frenzy, and then she would embalm me, and over and above would most likely be glad of me for a mummy for her museum. I thank you, Cousin Fransiska! no, look in another direction."

"That I have done already, Cousin Stellan," I replied; but then a great *but* comes in my way. This person is excellent, but then—she limps."

"The beautiful and renowned La Valliere," said he, "was also lame in the hip."

"Ah, that is true, and alters the affair considerable (for court people)," added I *in petto*.

"But she seems to me," continued he "to have a far greater fault, a fault which is very objectionable in a woman."

"God forbid! and this fault?" asked I.

"She appears to me," said he, "to have a cold heart: she has a repose in her nature which borders on an indifference to pleasing. This is a great fault in a lady."

"You surprise me, Stellan," said I. "I have never observed any coldness in Serena."

"I believe still that it is so," he replied; "but I should be glad to find that I was wrong; for she really is an excellent girl—but icy natures are cooling in the end." Cousin Stellan said this in a light and tolerably indifferent tone, and with these words he went out.

Ah, Cousin Stellan! You are subtle, but your fox will not catch my goose. I see very well how it is. Stellan wishes that I should examine Serena's heart, and then that I should tell him whether it is warm or cold towards him. In the first case, he then would advance securely; in the last he would withdraw himself, and that on the plea of "that great fault in a lady," and thus would compromise neither his comfort nor his consequence. But—does a man truly love when he is thus circumspect? At all events it is droll to see how the sour paste all at once can become sweet; and I will without doubt take the opportunity of discovering whether Serena's heart be warm or cold towards my handsome cousin. It is another thing whether I shall or shall not impart to him my discoveries.

6th August.

Now I know what hour the clock has struck, and you shall know it also, my Maria. Oh, Serena! Serena!

I was alone with her yesterday afternoon. I thought of Stellan, and asked her what she thought of our young guest. To my astonishment, I found that she had thought very little about him. She allowed that he was handsome, graceful, and full of talent; but she expressed her admiration with a desperate indifference. On this I began to abuse him a little. Love, thought I, has many lurking holes; and when we cannot decoy him out with sugar, one often can with salt: but in vain did I salt my observation with Stellan's indolence, levity, etc. I could not, in Serena's answers, discover the least point out of the quiver of love. Serena excused him like Christian Charity herself, whilst she acknowledged his faults.

"You are very gentle towards him, Serena," said I; "would you not undertake his education, for example, as his wife?"

"Ah, no, no," replied she, laughing.

"And why, ah, no, no!" returned I. "You acknowledge, truly, that he possesses very many good qualities, and excuse his faults with all zeal."

"Yes; but I could not think of him as my husband," she replied.

"And why not, Serena?"

"What shall I say," returned she. "He seems to be good and agreeable, but I do not believe that he could really love any other person or any other thing than himself."

"You would rather have my Bear then, Serena?"

"He who is so good to every one—who has so warm a heart—who is so active for others, oh yes!" said she.

"It is well," said I, "that I have him in secure possession. But tell me, dear Serena, and pardon me if I go too far with my questions, is there no other who stands in Stellan's way? or I really think you must have felt a little warmer interest for him—perhaps your heart is already disposed of? I have been told of a young man, who, a few years since, asked your hand."

Serena blushed deeply at the beginning of my question, then became pale, and answered after some reflection, "No

I did not love him ; but had I been able to have acted quite freely, it is probable I should have become his wife."

" And wherefore, if you did not love him ?"

" Because," said she, " I believed that he really loved me, and that I could have made him happy. There is something beautiful in being able on earth to make one human being happy."

" But you have had many lovers. Did none of them please your parents, or had you not the same compassion on these as on the one you have just mentioned ?"

" They did not need it," said she, smiling.

" How so ; they really loved you ?"

" O ! there are many kinds of love," replied she.

" That is true," I returned ; " let me see. In the first place we will set down temperate love, which speaks probably thus : ' See, there is a good, rational girl, who will make a regular housekeeper, and not occasion me too much expense. She would be exactly the wife for me.' What love shall we place second ?"

" Perhaps the enamoured," said Serena.

" Yes, certainly," assented I : " the enamoured, which has a bandage before his eyes, and becomes enchanted over head and ears. This love may be violent as a spring-storm or modest as a violet, but it is over as soon as these. Yet this love can, as well as the temperate love, elevate itself to one more inward, and may become nearly related to a sort of love for which I have great esteem—I mean warm friendship."

" Ah, that is beautiful !" said Serena. " It develops itself first perfectly during marriage itself, and I have often heard in my family how it speaks more in deeds than in words."

" Tell me that, dear Serena," I said, " since I also will gladly introduce this language into my house."

Had a man stood before Serena at this moment, he must have thrown himself at her feet, so charming and amiable was she as she said—" Thy well-being is mine ; my well-being thine. Let misfortune do his worst, it cannot make me unhappy if I only possess thee. If I have erred, or if I have acted well, I read it in thy eyes. That is my punishment, this is my reward. Whither should I go with my joy or with my sorrow, if not to thee ? Whither shouldst thou go, if not to me ? Have we not all things together ? If

thou art in any respect wanting, if thou art sometimes even unjust, what does that amount to? I enclose thee in my inmost heart, and then we love only the more. I have by thy side support, and home, and joy. In the whole wide world there is no one who understands me so well as thou."

I dried a tear and said, "But what could love say more than this, Serena, the highest love?"

"The highest love?" repeated Serena, and a mild paleness chased the crimson from her cheek, "that which it would say I know not, but I imagine what it must feel. It is a higher throb in the veins of friendship—it is the heavenly life—" Serena paused, her eyes filled with tears, and a glance full of exaltation completed the thought which the tongue was unable to speak.

And can this being, thought I, be in reality cold?

"And will you, Serena," said I, after a few moments, "who understand the highest happiness of marriage so well, will you never enjoy it? Will you remain single?"

"I think so," answered she, again calm; "but yet I will love thus sincerely my parents, you, all good people, and through this will I become happy."

"My dear Serena," said I, "that is all very well, so long as your heart remains free."

A thrill, a tremble passed through the fine warm hand which I held in mine. It was as if a heart-throb had thrilled through Serena's veins; and when I looked at her, her cheeks were flushed with red, and she breathed quicker. The moment I was about to enquire whence came this sudden emotion, I made a painful discovery. I heard the quick strokes of a horse's hoofs, and Bruno dismounted at the door. Serena must already have recognised from afar the sound of his horse's approach.

"Is it so?" thought I; and a light, anxious shudder passed, like an unfortunate foreboding, through body and soul. I pressed Serena's hand, and felt as if impelled to embrace her and clasp her more warmly to me; but this I was prevented doing by Bruno's noisy entrance. He always comes in like a tempest. But he now shook my hand so cordially, and threw so beautiful a glance on Serena, that the unpleasant impression which I experienced the moment before somewhat vanished.

Serena sat down to her embroidery frame and worked industriously, whilst Bruno's eyes rested on the fingers and on the flowers which seemed to spring from them.

"It is a lovely day," said I to Bruno.

"Yes," replied he, in his melodious voice; "but I feel it to be so now for the first time."

We were silent for long; and I was glad when the entrance of Bear converted our trio into a quartet, and soon after when it became a quintet through Stellan.

But this did not seem to please Bruno. He arose, and after he had paced the room a few times, he sate himself down to the piano at the other end; and then softly, like painfully repressed feelings, sounded forth his melodies in their wonderful and expressive life. Serena seemed to dream; she attended not to our conversation, nor, in fact, seemed aware of it till we began to speak of the approaching golden nuptials of her grandparents.

"It must be beautiful," said I with warmth, "on such a day to glance back through a long array of years, and discover only pure recollections and good deeds."

Bruno moved; the tones ceased; and leaning himself over the chair, I saw that he listened.

Cousin Stellan said with a sigh, "Such a happiness is the lot but of very few mortals!"

"And why, Cousin Stellan?" began I again; "because so few aim at it; so few learn to know and to govern themselves."

"And who knows himself? who can do it?" asked Bruno, rising from his seat.

"Hum!—I hope many can!" answered I, somewhat startled by the eager interruption.

"Yes, people think so!" continued Bruno, with gloomy warmth. "People think they know themselves because they are untried; because they have never examined down into the depths of the soul. Our connexions make the path smooth; life goes on like a sunshiny day; and the undisturbed spirit which no storm has shaken, no night darkened, regards itself as firm and light. The blind! The lucky! He knows little of life. But who that has proved how much life has of temptation, afflictions, and joys; who that feels his soul shaken by passions, would dare to say that he knows himself?

—would dare to think that he can be and act as he will ? And who is always the same ? Look into history ! Do not vice and meannesses pollute the lives of the greatest men ? Cannot the malefactor accomplish noble actions ? Cannot man in one hour of his life possess in his heart a paradise of love ; and in another, is it not cold, poor and desolate ? To know himself!—Is not that to feel himself a mass of contradiction of all possible kinds ? as a ball tossed between heaven and hell, with which angels and devils disport themselves ? Man can do much without consistency. He can do the greatest, the noblest actions but only one moment,—the next moment drags him downward ! To know himself is but to know his own weakness !”

Bruno’s speech had rushed onward like an impetuous stream which suddenly rises above the shore, and breaks through all impediments ; and I confess that I myself felt overwhelmed by it. In my own so often changeable and sensitive heart, a hundred evidences arose to the truth of Bruno’s sorrowful doctrine. I felt my courage sink, but Serena had not let go the rudder. She fixed her clear eyes on Bruno’s countenance, as he stood opposite to her, and when he ceased, she said with all her peculiarly sincere and consolatory gentleness :

“ Certainly, there are contradictions and inconsistencies in all men ; but must we not concede that these diminish exactly in the same proportion in which they are repressed ?”

“ It should be so,” said Bruno, slowly, fixing his eyes on her heaven-serene countenance.

“ And do we not see,” continued she, “ in manifold examples, that such an ennobling really takes place ? Do we not know that fallen human beings have erected themselves again ?—That the severely tried have come out of the contest as victors ? Carries not every man in his breast a secret image of God, which can enlighten his being, and which strives to exalt him to a higher existence ?”

“ Yes, it is so,—I believe it !” said Bruno, mildly though gloomily. He seated himself beside Serena.

“ Let us then hope for all,” continued she, with heartfelt emotion. “ The way may be more difficult for some natures than for others ; but He who is bright and good, and eter-

nally consistent, will sometime let his voice be heard, and will raise them to light and harmony."

"Amen! amen! so be it!" said Bruno, resting his forehead on his hand. "May all restless spirits receive peace!"

"Before all things goes a good will," thought I; but I would not raise my voice after Serena's angel-tones.

We sate long silent, and each one busied himself with his own thoughts. The silence at length dissolved itself into Mozart's Don Juan, which Stellan proposed; and Bruno, who played it to us, added thereto somewhat of his own powerful inspiration. He truly captivated me this evening. And I fancy all the rest were as much charmed as I. We scarcely left ourselves time to eat, but continued our music almost uninterruptedly till nearly eleven.—Godlike art!—Glorious Mozart!

We were all become through him such good friends that when Bruno left us we accompanied him part way home. The air was mild, and the starry heaven was displayed in streaming glory in the deep midnight twilight of August. Involuntarily we looked up in quiet admiration; and Stellan, who for the last several days has seemed to feel everything more deeply, Stellan said, "Under such a heaven as this, man must, for the first time, have divined of his own immortality!"

"Or rather, perhaps," objected Bruno, "rightly comprehended his own mortality; his dependence on outward powers. Since what says to you this multitude of stars; these eternal wanderers, on eternally the same paths, who pursue their heavenly career as silent as so many Trappists? Strange to our feelings, our sufferings, and our joys, they circle in eternal rest, and seem to answer only to our questions, 'Poor Dust, measure thyself with Immortality, and be mute!' Immortal life? No, this magnificent thought was never created to us out of those unfeeling heights. The starry heaven rather depresses than elevates us! But the world of music! Cannot we involve ourselves in this, and divine at least for a moment the greatness of life, and conceive of its harmony and its eternity? Oh (and Bruno's voice here assumed its deep melodious tone), oh, if there be one great thought in this universe, in this life which we lead, it must

be expressed in sound ! Listen to the fugue ! Listen how sphere sings to sphere ! how one thought answers another ! now all things are manifold, yet one thought sustains this manifold whole in strength and beauty. The fugue is that 'Be !' of the Creator. Thus innumerable worlds repeat that first word ! Listen to a symphony of Beethoven if you would have an interpretation of life ! Listen to the tones, how they live, suffer, love ; how they involve one another, and thus fashion out all the melodies of being ! Listen, at last, how the dissonances dissolve themselves into harmonies ; how storm, unrest, affliction, joy, hate, and love, hasten forward like the rivers of the earth to cast themselves into the ocean, where all is dissolved in an accord full of harmony and peace !'

I was agitated and carried away by Bruno's expression, although not satisfied with his words.

We went slowly down the long alley. Cousin Stellan was talking with me ; and I fancy that all at once I must have become possessed of two pair of eyes and two pair of ears, for while I listened to and replied to him, I was observant also of that which went on between Bruno and Serena, who walked on together a few paces before us. Bruno gathered a flower, which he presented to Serena, saying in a low voice, in which was something inexpressibly mild and tender, "Flowers and good wishes may truly be given at the same time ! Will you now accept them from me ? May you always be as peaceful as now ! May your bitterest cares resemble this night, full of heavenly lights ! May you be as happy as you are good and pure ! But," and here his voice sunk deeper, "when you are sustained by the hands of good angels, then pray for those who have no peace—who are not so pure as you,—pray for them, and pray for me !" These last words I imagined rather than heard. Bruno bent himself at that moment over Serena's hand, and Cousin Stellan began also, as I suspect, to have two pair of eyes and two pair of ears.

Serena's face was turned towards Bruno, but I could not perceive whether she answered him. Bruno's horse was then led up : he took a hasty leave of us, and vanished out of our sight.

Bruno ! One can neither get on well with this wonderful spirit, nor can one preserve rest with him. Yet it is precisely

those contradictions in him—this quick change between snow and thaw—storm and rest, night and sudden day, this fulness of life and warmth, which lends him at the same moment a restless and powerful interest. He repels and attracts, particularly the latter, because he is so perfectly natural.

But I am very uneasy, because Serena is so much inclined towards him. What can the white lily do upon the stormy wave? Can Bruno make a wife happy? Deserves he such a wife? Think, if he himself should be the criminal whose part he takes! What is he? What will he do? Thus I question myself—thus I question Bear. Bear always thinks the best, and loves his brother truly. Still he cannot perfectly console me. I have anxious forebodings. The heart which is heavy from these, says to you for the present—farewell, my good Maria!

CHAPTER IX.

Rosenvik, August 14th.

EIGHT days have passed since I last wrote to you, my Maria. I forgot that I ought to write for the sake of the romance which I have undertaken. But the necessity to live in some measure with you, led me again to the pen and to the narrative.

Cousin Stellan has left us. He must have been more and more convinced that Serena had that fault which he considered the most unpardonable in a lady; a strong desire for yawning too always came over him whenever Bruno came to Rosenvik; and he received letters from Stockholm, on account of important affairs, which required him to go there; and journeyed home, accompanied by my most sincere good wishes. I was sorry that his reform was stopped exactly in the beginning.

But Serena and Bruno have occupied me so much that I have had less thought for others. Bruno has made our house his. Bear sees it with joy; and I, though I am so uneasy, cannot be indifferent to this remarkable man. Serena lives, as it were, under a secret enchantment, and—what think you? I have never ventured to interrupt it with one word. She appears so happy, so joyous, so inwardly secure, that I fear to say one word that might disturb, or perhaps

wake, a half-slumbering feeling into consciousness. Beyond this, she unfolds into more beautiful life; her voice has developed the most delicious tones:—but Bruno is quite a different teacher to me—never has her countenance, her whole being, been more attractive than now. And Bruno? He is quiet, but one can see that he is altogether absorbed with her. He follows her wherever she goes; he sits by her. Sometimes he fixes upon her one of those glances which is never without its effect in the eye of man—but then this glance from him! He does not please me. At times he makes me tremble.

It is said that when the snake will make the lark his prey, he raises himself and fixes his glance upon her. The lark looks into the eye of the snake, and a wonderful and horrible magic seizes upon her. Fluttering on her pinions, she flies circling round and round and sings; never was her song so ravishing, nor fluttered her wings in stronger enjoyment of life—and so she sings, and so she circles around the snake ever nearer and nearer, till she sinks into his jaws—and is silent for ever!

O Serena! Serena!

In fact it will not do to let it proceed thus. I must warn Serena. She must know that which we know of this dangerous man. I must speak with Bear.

Later

See here our conversation.

“But, my dear Bear, it will not do; I assure thee something right serious will come of it.”

“Well, and what then? What can one wish better? I wish that it was so serious as to come to marriage. I believe truly that these two would accord extremely well for each other.”

“But is he worthy of such a wife? How do we know but that he may have done something much worse than that which we know he did in his youth? There is something in Bruno that prejudices me against him. I do not trust him. I believe at times that he is capable of the very worst. Only think if he be a murderer!—”

“My dear Fransiska,” said Bear almost angry, “why dost thou let thy imagination run away with thee so? Why,

without any occasion, canst thou think thus of any fellow-creature? Thou art unreasonable now, Fransiska!"

"Pardon me, angel, but thou—art not thou too mild? No occasion? We know very well that he has stolen."

"And didst thou never steal—as a child?" I paused,—bethought me, blushed, and was silent. Out of my innocent childish years rose, spectre-like, a host of biscuits, confec-tions, pieces of ribbon, and such like, as witnesses against me. At length I said, "Yes, Bear, I have stolen—I confess it—but at fifteen I stole no longer."

"Remember," remonstrated he, "the circumstances under which Bruno grew up. Most children fail a little; but a good education, a discreet management, stifles that dangerous yet natural impulse to appropriate that to oneself for which one has desire. Bruno was unskilfully trained, and must be judged accordingly. At all events the last lines he wrote to me testify that he acknowledged his fault and would abandon it. And undoubtedly the fearful lesson he had at the last scene with his mother would deter him for ever from this course.

I sighed and said, "At all events we have seen that he can shoot down that which refuses to obey him. He who can act so barbarously towards a horse, can do so also towards men."

"There is a great difference, Fanny! Nevertheless I will on no account excuse Bruno's error. Yes, he is wild; and at times ferocious and violent. He is still as in his youth—capricious, unsteady, but not bad. On the contrary, his heart is warm, and I am convinced that he will become good. It is precisely an angel like Serena which can obtain influence over him, and make him good and reasonable, at the same time that she makes him happy."

"My good Bear, thou talkest very beautifully, but yet I am not satisfied. Should we not at least acquaint Serena with the person to whom she so blindly resigns herself! Should she not know all that we know of his youth and his after-adventures!"

"Why? and to what purpose? If she loves him this will not withdraw her from him. But as his wife it might be painful for her to know that Bruno had deserved the contempt of his nearest connexions. At least, none but Bruno

himself should put her in possession of this knowledge. Eye to eye, heart to heart, can much be said, and much be reconciled."

"Ah! if one only knew something more of Bruno's later life!" sighed I.

"I have heard his relation, I have, indeed, seen his papers. All is clear and straightforward. I have seen letters from many distinguished men to him. They speak perfectly to his advantage. Beyond this—even if Bruno should have erred—do we not see clearly in him the desire after good? Our Lord would not reject him—and thou Fanny wouldest do it?"

"Ah no, no, Bear! But Serena——"

"Think on Bruno's warm heart," interrupted he, "on his great talents—yes, his genius, and then—on his great wealth! Why should not Serena be happy with him?"

"Ah, Bear," returned I, "that which makes a wife happy—that which beautifies home, is not the wealth of a husband—not his great talents—not the fire of his soul,—these may even destroy the peace of home. No, the happiness of the wife is that the husband have integrity; that he be good, rational, reasonable, and regular—like thee, Bear!"

We contended no more.

CHAPTER X.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM BRUNO M.— TO ANTONIO DE R.—.

..... I approached her without purpose. I would merely contemplate the beauty of her countenance; the glory of innocence, which rested upon it like a clear heaven. I would merely listen to her voice, her words; observe all her living grace. What the freshness of waves, what the tune of a song, what the endearments of my mother had been to me, that was to me her presence. I felt happy as I heard her voice; at her glance every painful feeling, every unholy thought, withdrew;—I was better.

Neither she nor I, but the Power which planted volcanic fire in the depths of my being, is the cause that this feeling suddenly grew into a devouring flame. But I love her not

as I formerly loved her. No Serena stood yet on my nightly way ;—she is my first pure love. And precisely on that account, exactly because she is totally dissimilar to all other women whom I have hitherto sought and won, is it that Serena is to me so bewitching. Her gentle and maidenly worth, which stamps her being and actions with so beautiful a propriety, binds me to her with the force of magic. Exactly because she is so destitute of everything like coquetry, am I ready to kneel before her, and to worship her. My eyes rest with an indescribable rapture on this mouth, which no heartless kiss has desecrated, no word of scorn or of falsehood has polluted. Purity,—a word which I have, too late, learned to understand,—purity is the heaven which beams upon her brow ; the spirit which emanates from her ; and for the sake of her purity I worship her—I who——yes, I can do it, and that is my salvation. What is beautiful, what is god-like, which at the same time is not pure ? Light, virtue, heaven !—eternal essences of purity ! Dark was my life, but in her I love you ! Serena stands there, and with her all the angels of life ; they whom I have dishonoured and despised ;—quiet virtues, peace, domestic life, — holy ties which I have renounced and abused ; how transportingly do they beckon me back, through her !

Tell me not that it is too late. I have rioted with the wild forms of life's enchantment. Like Faust, I danced with the witches of the Blocksberg : and the person of one whom I embraced was ashes ; and out of the mouth of another whom I kissed sprang a disgusting reptile ; a third changed herself in my arms into a serpent : and so I stood on the steep declivity of my way, and looked round, and all behind me was terrible and dark. The same restless fire, the same thirst, still raged within me ; but I sought other springs. I was strong, and full of life. In the battle, in contest with the raging elements, I felt within me a higher power, a mightier existence,—but all was so empty, empty, empty ! I conceived not that the fulness of life could be found in any human form. A human bosom,—great, full of love as the heavens, true, gentle, and pure—Oh ! there is a world in which to live ! perfect, beautiful, and eternal. There is the fire of passion, purified but not quenched ; the unquiet is made quiet ; the strength is exalted and confirmed.

If a spouse with a soul so great and lovely wandered by my side; if her heavenly spirit passed every hour of the day, like a vernal breeze over my soul; if she infused her pure and harmonious life into all that surrounds my daily path; if I could lean on her as—O my God! I cannot say, as on a mother's breast, since that has spurned me from it,—but could I press a wife to my bosom in a fast and everlasting embrace, and say from the depths of my heart, “Thou art an angel, and thou art mine!” Oh! believest thou not that earlier sins could be forgiven, that bitter memories could be expunged, that the wavering soul could become established in a higher love?—believest thou not that on the blasted ground a new paradise might yet bloom?

I look on Serena, and I must believe it possible. I have said to myself, “She must become mine, if I am to find peace on the earth!” But she—the good, the pure, the amiable, will she be able to love me?—will she be willing to unite her fate with mine? And they in whose power lies her disposal; they who above all things estimate purity of character, social and domestic virtues, will these bestow her, the most beautiful and most precious of their possessions, on a man whose reputation from very childhood has been stained,—whose life has been covered with darkness?

I hear thee utter these questions, and this is my answer.

There is something in me,—call it pride, presumption, what thou wilt,—but I know there is something in me which no one so readily withstands; a power, a will which breaks iron; a fire which can devour everything before it, in order to burn in the air, for which it yearns. I have proved it often, and no one has been able to resist it but my mother;—for my blood also runs in her veins,—and yet, mother, we have not fought out the contest between us.

I have seen my mother! She knew me not again, and I scarcely knew her. She was a beautiful woman. She is much changed; and it would seem not simply through age. I sought opportunity to see her—I *must* see her; but as I stood there as a stranger before her—as I heard again the well-known voice—I could not support it. I know not when I shall discover myself. She is not yet prepared for it, nor I either. I was desperately and painfully agitated in her presence; and therefore I flee it—till some farther time. I

love and fear, I languish and fly. Thus I stood in agonising strife with myself, when Serena entered. I placed myself by her side, and from this moment I became calmer. A hope, a ray of light shone forth. If even my mother—my mother would not forgive Cain had perpetrated a heavier crime than I, on him rested the curse of his mother, and yet —into the desert into which he wandered followed him his wife! An angel of reconciliation went with him.

Serena! Serena! if I did not love thee so devotedly, I could pity thee; for I feel that it is not in vain that I have fixed my gaze upon thee. But I will love thee as never woman has yet been loved. I will surround thee with all the charms of life; every day shalt thou make people happy, and thy noble heart shall live on blessings. Hagar must submit herself to her fate. It is long since she ceased to make any claims on my affections, and that she must continue to do, even did we remain together. She must and will bear to see me happy with another. She knows me—she will not dare Curse on her! Should she breathe a poison breath on thee, who But I am wild if I think on this woman, and I will not. Well, I will be affectionate—I will be as Serena wills. There are yet stores of the good and the tender in me; the spring is not irremediably defiled; it requires nothing so much as to be purified—but an angel must descend into the waters.

But can an angel indeed approach him whom the curse of a mother My mother! if she should not pardon! Ah, thought of destruction! vulture which gnaws at my heart—away! away!

All will speedily be spoken out and decided, for my soul yearns after certainty. It were perhaps wiser to postpone it, to await a fitting time; but I cannot, and I will not. I take my fortune always by storm—may it be so now!

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M——.

Rosenvik, August 17th.

Yesterday was a wonderful, rich, merry, and yet unpleasant day. We spent it at Ramm. We were some days before invited thither, with many of our neighbours. Ma chère mère was also invited, but excused herself, on the plea

that for many years she has accepted no invitations, and now could make no exceptions. Serena had spent the preceding day with her grandparents, and was to accompany them to Ramm, whether they were pressingly invited by Bruno, who, by the new school, and through many other circumstances, had now placed himself in a close connexion with the worthy old Dahl.

At our arrival we found all without unchanged : the trees grew as before, wild and thick, around the blackened walls. Bruno met us on the steps, and received us with a serious friendliness. There was something peculiarly prepossessing in his countenance. Bear was excited and pale, as he shook his brother's hand ; none of us said anything, and Bruno conducted me in silence into the house, where the splendour of the furniture struck me with amazement. But my dear Serena soon engrossed all my attention. I thought I had never seen her so beautiful. That light blue muslin dress, that tulle handkerchief which she had thrown over her snowy shoulders, all became her so well ; and her innocent countenance beamed with health and gaiety. I and Rosenvik, thought I with pleasure, have both contributed to these roses. The Patriarchs, too, said many kind words to me on the same score.

The guests assembled. Lagman Hök and Miss Hellevi Husgafvel came together in the disobligeant. Exactly as we were about to seat ourselves at table, the noise of an arrival was heard in the court ; and to my amazement I beheld a cabriolet drawn by an Öland pony, and driven by a young maiden, who with her little equipage made a grand circle round the court, cracked loudly the whip, and drew up before the door.

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! that is Mally, my little Mally !" laughed out the Major, who stood at the window with me. "Yes, yes, she cuts a dash in the world. She has taste in horses. People should let children follow their own propensities, Madame Werner ; that fills them full of health and activity. It does no good, compulsion. They will become sober soon enough. I know that from myself."

Mally now made her entrance ; her hair all flying wild ; her gait at once waggish and awkward. Madame von P. cast a look on her and then on her own daughters, which

seemed to say—"God be praised! my daughters have received education and accomplishment." My good Brita Kajsa, though a lover of the natural, blushed at the entrance of her daughter, and looked disconcerted.

"What a figure you are!" said she, as she busied herself to bring her clothes and hair into some degree of order.

"Eh! eh! mamma, how you hurt me," cried Mally, wincing and grinning.

Bruno conducted Madame Dahl to table, the rest followed in couples—the dinner was superb. Bruno will destroy the simple habit of the country with such examples of luxury. I shall tell him this. But he was a most agreeable host. His attention to the old Dahls had something reverential and nearly filial in it, which became him well; and Serena appeared to observe it with joy. From the dining-room Bruno conducted us down into the garden, where two ample tents were pitched. There too the accommodation of the Patriarchs appeared to have been most solicitously provided for. In one of the tents were two commodious easy-chairs for them, and the ground was covered with the costliest matting. Before this tent a fountain threw into the air its fresh and splashing stream. Orange-trees, at once full of fruit and flower, stood at a certain distance round, and every little breath of air bore to us their balsamic fragrance. I was charmed with the whole of this arrangement, which the unusual heat of the day made still more agreeable. My imagination transported me into an ideal world; I shaped to myself a nomadic life in such scenery; and shepherdesses like Serena, and Patriarchs, and tents, and orange-groves, and—but in this moment burst in Madame von P., exclaiming: "Ah! how charming is all this, my dear Madame Werner! Count L. and we had just such tents at Gustafsberg. One day they were with us, and the other day we were with them, *tout familièrement*. It was uncommonly gay. It is too charming! The L.'s and we had very little intercourse with the other society there; we were sufficient of ourselves. Oh! I should so like to know how our common friend the dear Baroness H. is; a delightful person! She and I found so much amusement together. Of course, we have seen much of the great world, and have a multitude of common acquaintance."

"It is very hot here," said I. It was agreeably cool in

the tent, but Madame von P.'s discourse made it feel to me quite sultry. I arose ; my persecutor did the same. Immediately outside of the tent we met Bruno. Madame von P. rushed up to him, "Ah, mon cher Monsieur Romilly, c'est charmant, c'est charmant ! your park is heavenly. What tints on these trees ! What groups ! What perspective ! See there, my best Madame Werner,—there, through the arch of the bridge, what effect ! Nay, you must stoop yet a little more, yet a little,—under this bough here—is it not heavenly ? (I was near breaking my neck.) What *ensemble*, what effect !" Bruno made a solemn bow to Madame von P., and retired into the tent. I thought, "Oh ! that this affection of some people should be able even to destroy the enjoyment of nature for others." Madame von P.'s tints and effect had spoiled to me the whole prospect. At this moment I heard a loud cry ; and as I hurried towards the part whence it came, there saw I the Adamites, who had rent fruit and flowers from the orange-trees, and now set themselves in battle array to resist some young gentlemen who attempted to restrain their depredation.

"There we have the state of nature," thought I with a sigh. Brita Kajsa came forth, dealt out blows and cuffs amongst her brood ; and, for this time, order was restored, and we could enjoy our coffee and the accompanying delicacies in peace.

After a while two open carriages drove up, and Bruno proposed to the company an excursion in the park. The carriages were for the elder portion, the younger must go on foot. Bruno offered Serena his arm ; the two Dahls, Bear and I, entered one carriage. The Major's lady, who was in the other with Madame von P., wished to have her children with them, but the Adamites vociferously refused, and were therefore entrusted during the walk to the care of their sister Mally.

We proceeded : the weather was beautiful, and I should have enjoyed the drive extremely, could I only have ceased to think of Bruno and Serena. "Will he say anything to her ?" thought I ; "and what will he say ?" The Patriarchs took their siesta in the comfortably rocking carriage ; Bear sat silent and sunk in thought ; and so we drove for perhaps an hour and half.

As we returned we saw the walkers also returning in different groups. As Serena, accompanied by Bruno, entered the drawing-room, I became immediately uneasy, for I saw that something had occurred. She was pale and excited; Bruno's countenance, on the contrary, was full of beaming life. After he had greeted us, and had inquired of the Patriarchs whether they had enjoyed their drive, whether they had found the carriage sufficiently easy, etc., he sate down to the organ, and let loose the tones of that mighty instrument. It was the same power, the same fire, the same deep inspiration, which transported me on the former evening on the lake; and now, as then, seized on my innermost soul. The Misses von P. walked arm-in-arm in the next room, gossiping and laughing incessantly with some gentlemen, and were evidently only occupied with themselves. Madame von P. had fallen into a desperate talk with Jane Marie; and I could not comprehend how Jane Marie, who is, nevertheless, musical, could during such music sit and gossip about—Heaven knows what! It was quite a matter of course that Miss Husgafvel, who has no taste for music, should be engaged with Lagman Hök looking at some beautiful paintings. But Bruno was not altogether destitute of devoted listeners. Amongst these were Bear, the Patriarchs, and Serena, who now sat between them. I myself sate so that I could observe Bruno's countenance. It was in this moment remarkable, strong, full of courage, suffering, and love. That which was delineated on his features he poured forth also in a fantasia, in which every feeling, power, passion, and enjoyment seemed to contend together, and the conflict rose to the very pitch of despair; then making a wonderful and bold transition, and in tones which reminded you of the words—"Let there be light!" he fell into a noble air from the "Creation" of Haydn; in which the words, as well as the music, expressed how the elements arrayed themselves under the eye of the Almighty. I glanced at Serena. Deep emotion, but at the same time a quiet glory, illumined her beautiful countenance. Ah! it is in such moments that we understand the fulness of life—that Heaven opens upon our spirit,—it ascends thither on the wings of sound, embraces all the angels of life, comprehends all the love of God, all the beauty of creation, and is ready to expire with happiness.

Bruno's voice is not, properly speaking, beautiful; but it is powerful, manly, and expressive. It is the voice of a mighty spirit. "O Bruno!" thought I; "hast thou received such fine endowments only to abuse them? Art thou able to sing of the pure majesty of existence, and canst not establish it in thy soul, in thy life?"

The music ceased. Bruno's listeners sate silent with tears in their eyes; even Miss Adele von P. stood in the doorway astonished, and as it were fixed to the spot by enchantment. Then came the unlucky Madame von P., and overwhelmed Bruno with remarks on art, and on ancient and modern composers. "Weber," said she, "is whimsical; Rossini poor in melody; Meyerbeer excels both,—he is, so to say, '*le prince de la musique.*'" It was in another way that old Madame Dahl expressed her satisfaction. She pressed Bruno's hand, and said warmly, "You have made the old young again. It is very, very long since I have enjoyed such a pleasure; and I thank you from my heart."

"You make me happy," said Bruno, kissed her hand with deep respect, and seated himself near her.

A great commotion was now heard without in the hall. It proceeded from the Adamites, who were just returned from the wood, dirty and torn; but full of fresh life and spirit. They had started some roes, killed a snake, and captured a squirrel, which they now brought in in triumph. Brita Kajsa endeavoured to moderate their vociferous joy, but it succeeded only to a certain extent with Mally. The two younger children sprang screaming about, and clambered with their dirty feet on the chairs and sofas—oh, that *Ma chère mère* could but have seen it!—while they sought to amuse themselves with now letting that unfortunate squirrel loose, and now catching it again. Their parents at length troubled themselves no further about their wild conduct; but Serena and I gave each other a sign, and mixed ourselves in the affair. The result was that I set the squirrel at liberty; while Serena, partly by serious endeavour, and partly by sportiveness, drew the children to her, and succeeded in keeping them still by cutting them in paper a variety of little figures and equipages, and thus art exhibited her ability to tame rude nature.

The lively Miss Hellevi, who is always desirous to keep

people in motion, proposed social amusements; and we commenced a game of forfeits, and were quickly all alive. A great number of forfeits had to be redeemed; and Miss Hellevi shone wonderfully in witty and merry propositions. It was indescribably amusing that Bear had to dance. I never laughed so immoderately. You should really have seen his comic gravity and his strange grimaces.

“What shall that person do to whom this belongs?”

“He shall tell a little story,” said Miss Hellevi.

The forfeit was mine; and without consideration I began to relate that which presented itself first to my mind. It was this little legend. “Two little boys went down, on a holiday evening, to the river near their father’s house. There they heard beautiful music, and saw the Neck, that sat upon the azure wave in the shade of the alders, and played on the harp, and sang with all his heart. When the boys had listened a good while to the music, they called out, ‘Of what use is it, Neck, that thou canst play so beautifully? Thou canst never be happy for all that.’ As the Neck beard these words, he threw away the harp, and sank into the depths of the water.”

Here I paused, for I had accidentally looked at Bruno, and a glance of his eye fell upon me, so piercing, dark, and full of trouble, that it struck me dumb. It was some seconds before I could collect myself sufficiently to proceed:—“When the boys returned home they related the occurrence to their father. He reproved them for having spoken too severely to the Neck, and told them that they were wrong, for even the Neck may one day be saved. The next evening the boys went again down to the river. They heard now no sweet music, but they saw the Neck, which sate on the water in the shade of the alder, and wept. And they called to it, and said—‘Don’t weep, Neck, for our father says that thou also wilt be saved one day.’ Then the Neck wept no more, but took his harp again and played, and sung most gloriously till deep in the night.”

I glanced again at Bruno. He was pale. His wonderful eyes were fixed stedfastly upon me, as before, but now they were filled with tears.

“Madame Werner shall have her forfeit again, and with thanks and praise for her charming legend,” said Miss

Hellevi. Other forfeits followed, and were redeemed by various jokes and whims. One came whose owner was judged to declaim something in prose or verse. It was a silk handkerchief, and Miss Hellevi, as soon as she saw it, exclaimed—"Belongs not this to our host?"

"Yes," cried Mally Stålmark with a loud voice, "but I took it, because I myself had nothing to give as a forfeit." Mally makes very free in the world, thought I.

"But the law of the game cannot be violated," said Miss Husgafvel; "the owner of the forfeit must redeem it. Mr. Romilly, you have heard the judgment."

"But," said he, excusing himself, "I was not in the game with you."

"But now you are," cried zealously Miss Hellevi; and as Madame Dahl joined in begging that Bruno would fulfil the condition, he objected no further. He arose, made no preparation, and yet in a moment was totally changed, as he stood there high and still, and sunk, as it were, in dark and profound self-questioning. His very first motion, his first word, went through me with a shudder. The scene was the truth itself. It was from himself, from his own inward cloud-wrapt spirit, that Bruno pronounced Hamlet's celebrated monologue—

To be, or not to be?—that is the question.

In truth, Bruno is no ordinary man, is endowed with no ordinary talents; and yet, as a man, how much higher stands my Bear! A deep silence continued in the room after Bruno had ceased to speak; and it appeared difficult to go back to the sports of life after this glance into its dark depths.

In the mean time it was growing late; and the aged Dahls, who would not stay to supper, took leave of their host, thanking him with much cordiality for so pleasant a day. They took Serena, too, with them, and promised to deliver her duly at Rosenvik. Bruno accompanied them to their carriage. When they were gone, all seemed to become wearisome; and, in order to get away from the everlasting-continuing game of forfeits, I asked Adele von P., who sate next me, whether she would not take a turn with me in the park. She consented with warmth. I took her arm, and we went out. The evening was beautiful; the twilight, the silence, all

which surrounded us, appeared to invite us to that pleasant and yet serious thought which lights and the life of society so easily dissipate.

"How beautiful is it here!" said I.

"Yes," answered Adele, "since here are solemnity and truth."

I was surprised by the tone in which these words were spoken, and glanced at my companion. Adele von P. continued with emotion: "Madame Werner, you have taken me, probably, only for a silly and superficial person, and I know now that I have been such. But to-day a wonderful feeling has been awakened in me. I feel myself humbled, and yet exalted. I would willingly begin again to live,—to learn. I would fain be able to return to nature and to truth!"

"You would fain abandon artificiality for genuine art;—is not that it?" said I. "You would fain comprehend and communicate nature and life in their deeper sense?"

"Yes, I believe so. I have sometimes suspected that my accomplishment was but a vain pageantry; but now, as I comprehend it better,—now so much time is lost, God knows whether I shall ever be able to come to the clear daylight!"

"Do not despair of it," replied I, zealously. "Hold fast only the impression, and maintain the desire which to-day has been awakened." At this moment was heard in the park an anxious, uneasy voice, calling, "Adele! Adele!" Adele answered; and Madame von P. came running to us, while with evident alarm she exclaimed, "Adele! my little angel! you here without a shawl, and with your cough! and the dew, and the night air! My dear child, how could you do so? Come in, I entreat you. But you must not go thus thinly clad. You must take my shawl, I need it less than you." And notwithstanding the reluctance of the daughter, she wrapped her in her own shawl, and drew it carefully round her bosom. Mother and daughter thereon kissed each other affectionately, and hastened together into the house.

Had I always found Madame von P. ridiculous? I forgot it totally at this moment. I saw only the tender, amiable mother; and I thought—"That is water to Bear's mill." If Madame von P. only knew how really poetical and interest-

ing she then was, she would be ashamed of endeavouring to appear so by other means.

As I had thus remained behind in the park, and as I was slowly returning towards the house, I encountered the young Robert Stålmark, who was walking to and fro, and talking to himself. He offered to see me in, and said after a while, with a dissatisfied countenance, "It is very stupid to possess no talent, to understand nothing, to be able to do nothing which belongs to—"

"To what one calls higher accomplishment?" said I, inquiringly. (I found myself this evening selected to put people into the way.)

"Ah, yes!" replied young Robert. "I hear so much said of nature and nature; but still methinks it could not be very irrational to adorn her with some art, with some accomplishment."

"Yes, one must make a distinction between nature in her poverty and her rudeness, and nature in her exalted refinement."

Robert glanced at me with one of those living, intelligent looks, which reveal a brightly-conceived idea; but immediately afterwards added, "Yes, was I not already so old; but now it is probably the best thing to chase all such thoughts out of the mind."

"What thoughts?" demanded I, warmly. "Of a talent, or a higher accomplishment? Good friend Robert, a talent for the exercise of any fine art, is comparatively of little consequence; but the capacity to love and value that which is beautiful, the capacity to enjoy the society of accomplished people, to create for yourself a life full of noble interest,—that is no trivial affair; and you are still young enough to qualify yourself for that. Renounce not, on account of any necessary exertion, the richest well-springs of the happiness of life."

We were now arrived on the steps, and I heard Robert, as if speaking to himself, say, "No, no, that will I not! I will attempt it in good earnest! Something shall really be done!"

These two little scenes delighted me. Suddenly and marvellously are startled into life the noblest seeds which slumber in the human bosom. Bruno's powerful spirit had

at once, as it were with the force of magic, called forth two beings into a higher consciousness of their nature ; and thus is, for the souls of men, the revelation of every noble gift,—a proclamation to arise !

But to return to Ramm, and the supper. I was glad when it was over, and Bruno, to a certainty, was not less so. He was no more like the same person that he had been during the day, than November is like May. The eyebrows had again contracted ; and he had evidently found it difficult to play out to the end the part of the cheerful, agreeable host. How charming was it, as the cabriolet once more rolled away towards Rosenvik ; and as I was able to pour into Bear's ear all the relations which I have here written.

We arrived at home in the bright moonlight. I found Serena in the front room. She stood at the open window, her face turned towards Ramm. I went softly up to her, and threw my arms around her. She leaned her head against mine. The evening breeze blew cold, yet soft, and bore melodious tones with it. They came from Ramm. I felt a tear fall on my bosom. Serena's lips touched my cheek, while she whispered, " My dear, kind Fanny, I must leave thee. I have been too long from home ; let me, in the morning, return to my aged parents."

" Serena, my angel !" exclaimed I in turn. " What is amiss ? What has happened ? Why this ? "

" Ask not," said Serena, while she laid her small feverish hand on mine. " Ask not now. In a while I will tell you all ; now I cannot. Let me go early in the morning with the Doctor."

" And what will your grandparents say ? if——"

" I will tell them how it is. I will satisfy them. Do not be uneasy, dear Fanny ; they will be satisfied ; they——"

" Yes, they ! I do not doubt that at all," interrupted I in a state of great excitement. " They, who will learn all ; but I, who lose you, and know not why—I ? You have no confidence in me, Serena ! You do not love me ! "

Serena threw her arm round my neck and said : " O Fanny ! you give me pain. You know that I never had a friend that I loved so much as you. That which I withhold from you, can I yet reveal to no one ; but a day will come when, for those whom I sincerely love, I shall have no longer a secret."

"That is enough, my dear Serena! I was, indeed, too bad. Forgive me! But see you, dear Serena—you are become as dear to me as a sister; your welfare is as near to my heart as if it were my own—and—and—" I began to cry like a child; Serena did the same. Bear found us thus, and began to scold that we stood with the window open. When he had closed it, he took both our hands, and inquired, with a kind and sympathising look, what so much troubled us?

"Oh, she will leave us, Bear! Serena will go home early to-morrow!" Bear looked so astonished at us that I was frightened, and said, "Well, well, it is no national calamity, that you should be so struck with it." But Bear's countenance speedily recovered its customary good-humoured serenity, and he said, "Well, if she goes away, she will probably come back again."

In my anxiety I had nearly forgotten this possibility, and half comforted, I exclaimed, "O yes, Serena! You will soon, soon come back again! Is it not so? You will not long stay away?"

But I will not waste my paper with speech and answer. Spite of my grounds of consolation it went near my heart to separate from Serena, for I saw clearly that this year she could not again make a long abode with us. This morning she departed at seven o'clock; sitting at Bear's side with a large bouquet in her hand, while he set out cursing a little to himself at a great basket of currants which he was obliged to set between his feet.

How empty seems the house now she is gone! I endeavour in vain to forget it, and busy myself with writing, but that does not succeed. It is impossible to describe the charm, the spring, which such a being diffuses around her. She is always so friendly, so clear-spirited, so kind. I was better for living with her. I learned through her to become aware of many blessings which are in life, and about me here. But now we shall daily write to one another, that is something; and Bear will be the postman. To-day, even, I rejoice in the belief that I shall receive by him a note; but her secret—that I shall not yet learn. It troubles and disquiets me.

TO THE READER, FROM A STRANGER LADY.

Dear and curious Reader!

Availing myself of an apology already made, and commiserating the pain which thou, my Reader, probably participatest with Madame Werner, I will now—for singularly enough, one and another knows more, as it happens, than the good Doctor's lady herself—I will now, just between ourselves, let thee into a secret.

In the park at Ramm drives Madame Werner, as she has already related. We, the reader and I, follow in silence the footsteps of the walkers. During this ramble we observe how the Misses von P., notwithstanding their ornamental gentility, condescend to flirt with the brothers Stålmark in a manner which evinces neither refinement nor delicacy of feeling. By this we see plainly, that would-be accomplishment and rudeness can go very well hand in hand. But we do not linger long near this picture, which has neither charm nor keeping. We prefer casting a glance after Bruno, who conducts Serena with an air of respect and solicitude, which to thy penetrating eye, sagacious reader, clearly betrays what he is, and what he feels. The Adamites follow them with laughter and boisterousness.

"Lean more freely on my arm," says Bruno, with a soft and melodious voice. "Let me support you; let me believe, be it only for a moment, that I am of some consequence to you."

They went on in silence. The wood whispered around them, and bowed over them its umbrageous crown. There ruled now in Bruno's soul—and he has often said that it is this very feeling which makes him so happy by Serena's side—a peace which he has rarely enjoyed. Something of her dear and gentle being seemed to pass over into his own; he felt as though his better genius were near him; and the beneficent pulse of life, that genial feeling, that pure thought, that indistinct and yet mighty hope of a beautiful future,—those glad vernal anticipations to which no heart which ever beat in a human form is wholly a stranger,—all came like angels and saluted his spirit. Then rose a voice in him—it was that of repentance,—and cried, "Weep for the past, for the lost!" but another, sweet and strong as eternal mercy

cried still louder, "Despair not, since she is nigh thee!" And then he looked into her face—it was so friendly, so clear,—and he saw her only.

At once the Adamites raised a ringing cry of joy, and sprang into the wood. Sister Mally called them back, continuing herself to run after them. A roe bounded timidly on before them. All vanished;—Bruno was left alone with Serena. Serena stood still as irresolute. They stood by a fine old oak, round whose stem was raised a bank of turf, and about which flowers were planted. It seemed a spot that was tended with peculiar care.

"Will you not rest here a moment?" asked Bruno. "We can here await our little friends, who will probably come back hither."

Serena consented, and seated herself. Bruno stood before her, and followed observantly the looks with which she surveyed the place, and which betrayed awakening recollections.

"I fancy that I recognise this spot and this tree," said she at length. "Yes, certainly, here it was, many years ago, that a great danger threatened me—I was then but a little child;—I think it was exactly under this tree. A snake had wound itself about my neck. It would most likely have stung or strangled me, had it not been for the spirit and presence of mind of a little boy, who rescued me at the peril of his own life."

"Do you remember this circumstance?" asked Bruno, with emotion. "*He* remembers it himself."

"He! what? who? How do you know?" demanded Serena rapidly, and in astonishment.

"He is my friend. He has often told me of the child that he carried in his arms through the woods of Ramm."

"Oh, lives he yet? Where is he? What know you of him?" asked Serena, in the highest excitement.

"He lives. Perhaps it were better if he did not. His life has given no one pleasure. But his unquiet heart cannot rest till he has found another and a better heart to which to unite itself. He experienced early misfortune—nay, indeed, crime—he was disowned by his mother! He then went wildly about in the world for a long time, and battled with life, with men, with himself. He sought he knew not what—he had early lost himself. He who reposes on the bosom

of a mother or a wife—who holds the hand of a dear sister—he knows not, he understands not, the emptiness and the darkness which *he* feels who has no one in the great wide world—no one who loves him, and holds him fast in love, and calls tenderly ‘Come back!—no one who presses the repentant to his heart, and says ‘I forgive!’ Is it to be wondered at, that he who is thus cast off, wrecked in heart and hope, given as a prey to the winds—that he should wander wide, and into labyrinths of error? Serena, would you condemn him?’

“I? Ah, I would weep over him!”

“Do you weep over him, Serena? He blesses those tears, and he is not unworthy of them. Bruno erred, but he sank not. An invisible hand supported him. Was it the angel which secretly whispered to him of a holier and a better world? I will believe it. Certain it is that he never forgot her. In his richest remembrances, in his best feelings, in the depths of his soul, she stood in the glory of her innocence.

—O Serena! if he now stood before you and said, ‘This bias of childhood is now become love—true, eternal love; those memories are reality! They are dear to me, Serena, as the reconciliation with my mother—as the hope of God’s mercy; dearer, a thousand times dearer, than life!—Serena, it is Bruno, the friend of your childhood, who here pays you the homage of his soul!’ and in boundless love Bruno sank before her on his knee. “It is Bruno who craves from you his peace, his happiness, his life! Serena, will you cast me from you?”

“O my God!—Bruno!” cried Serena, in indescribable agitation of spirit, and reached him her hand.

He clasped it passionately between his own, and asked, with a look which seemed powerful enough to draw forth secrets which lie in the depth of the soul, “Is it pity—is it love—which extends to me this hand?”

“It is—not pity. Oh, arise!”

Voice were heard; footsteps approached. Bruno pressed Serena’s hand to his heart as he arose, and said, “Preserve my secret! The hour is not yet come.” He could say no more. Miss Hellevi Husgafvel, at the head of a lively troop of walkers, joined them, and did not leave them again. In the evening, as Bruno conducted Serena to the carriage, he

led her a moment back, and whispered, audible only to her, "One word! one word! Not pity;—it was then a more beautiful feeling? Serena! one word—one look!"

But Serena spoke no word, gave no look, in answer. She drew her hand from his; and, timid as the bird flying to its nest, hastened to her aged grandparents. Bruno looked darkly after the fast-speeding carriage; and I, my Reader, now take a friendly leave of thee.

CHAPTER XI.

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M.—.

Rosenvik, August 22nd.

THE cloud which hung over us has sunk lower. There will be a storm to a certainty. God guide it to blessing, and not to destruction!

Serena was gone, and with her much joy, much pleasantness. No one felt it deeper than Bruno. He came as usual in the evening, but was no longer like himself. He came, saluted us gloomily, was silent, went to and fro in a restless mood, or seated himself near the spot where Serena was accustomed to sit, and leaned his head on his hand. Thus sate he a long time without a word; and only the vein on his forehead, which swelled visibly, testified the contest in his mind.

Bear frequently fixed on him the still, observant eye of the physician, which seemed to watch the progress of the inward struggle, and await the crisis. I was friendly—yes, even with a sisterly kindness—towards Bruno; for I saw that he suffered and was unhappy. Bruno appeared sometimes as though he would say something; it seemed to me as if he would ask, or would confess, something of that which lay heavy on his heart; but no such word came to solve the mystery, and all the conversation which we began, ended with brief answers or with his total silence. I must testify, however, that no bad humour—the demon with which little souls often tyrannise over those about them—discovered itself in the mood and manner of Bruno. One saw that he was in deep trouble, which rendered him deaf and dumb to all that was going on around him. We resolved at last to

leave him to himself ; and passed our evening as we usually do when we are alone—Bear with his joinery, and I reading something aloud to him. Bruno might listen if he were disposed.

Last evening he came again, and was milder than usual. He took Bear's and my hands, pressed them, and said, "I am no agreeable guest for you, my friends ; but have forbearance with me." He turned quietly away from us, and seated himself at the piano, where he played a stirring and stormy piece. Tea came in : I prepared it, and handed to Bear a large cup,—he has always a particular teacup for himself, with ugly little blue Cupids, which please him vastly. As I reached him this, and he, in his good humour, kissed my hand, I know not how it happened—but he seemed so agreeable, so kind, so excellent—but I laid aside the teacup and basket of confections, and seizing his great head, pressed it to my heart with lively affection. Bear put one arm round me, but—oh, scandalous ! stretched out the other towards the cake-basket. I was still so good to him that I only scolded him jocosely for his divided love. Bear answered me in the same humour, when we were startled by a deep painful sigh, more resembling, indeed, a suppressed groan. We looked at Bruno, and saw him pale, and, with an expression not to be described, regarding us. "Oh, my God ! my God !" exclaimed he, slowly, while he laid his hand on his forehead as in unspeakable agony ; and now ran—no, started—tears from his eyes with a violence which at once astonished and shocked me. Bear stood up, and with an unanimous impulse we both approached Bruno. The iron bands were now rent from his heart : he stretched out his arms towards us, and cried with a voice which the most powerful emotion speedily choked again, "My mother!—reconcile me with my mother!"

Bear and I went to him ; we opened our arms to him ; we embraced him. He was nearly beside himself. He pressed us with wild vehemence to his breast ; and in broken sentences, which seemed flung as it were from his tempested soul, he cried, "Manage for me ; I cannot do it ! I am cursed!—Speak ; prepare the way for me ! See if I can go to her. Manage, that when I come she shall not spurn me away. Say that I have suffered much—much—Let me

repose on her bosom. Till then can I find no rest.—My mother!—my mother!—”

Our tears flowed. We spoke to him tender, pacifying, comforting words. We promised to act for him; we assured him that all should turn out well. But the storm which at length had burst forth, could not quickly lay itself. He was in the most violent agitation of mind; and after he had for some moments walked vehemently to and fro in the room, he said to us, “I must now leave you. Forgive this scene. Think of me, and for me. Let me know that which you undertake; and let that which must come, come quickly. This waiting is hell!” In the same moment he was on horseback, and vanished with the rapidity of lightning.

Bear and I stood *vis-à-vis*, and looked at each other as if the day of judgment had broken upon us. Bear forgot to drink his tea. I had never before seen him so disturbed. This filled me with wonder, for I had imagined that the affair, though it would be difficult to bring about, must necessarily end happily; and the prodigal son must be once more received into his mother’s house. “It is not credible,” I said, “that a mother will not receive with open arms her repentant and returning son.”

“Oh, you do not yet fully know Ma chère mère,” said Bear, grinning and spitting—which last occurs now only on extraordinary occasions. “In certain regions of her mind she is as it were petrified; and then her mental ailment!—I hope that she will acknowledge and receive again her son, when she sees him, and learns his present mood of mind. I hope it, but how to manage it; how to prepare her for it, when the mere mentioning his name drives her out of her senses! I will not answer for it, that her disorder of mind does not return. People like her and her son run, through the violence of their passions, on the very precipice of the gulf of madness. A touch may precipitate them.”

“God preserve us!” I exclaimed.

“But, at all events, the attempt at reconciliation,” said Bear, “must be made. Better that mother and son die in frenzy than in hate. But we must go cautiously to work. Ma chère mère must in the first place be sounded; her pulse must be felt; she is not a patient to be treated lightly.”

We planned and pondered how the matter was to be

assayed. We took up and threw away scheme after scheme and at length we resolved on the following.

It has now been for some time the custom, when we are all assembled at Carlsfors in an evening, to read aloud romances or other light and amusing stories. I have generally been the reader, and Ma chère mère, who seldom asks after any other books but the Bible and the cookery book, yet seemed sometimes to listen with pleasure. Bear and I now resolved, the next evening that we should spend at Carlsfors, to propose a reading, and to be prepared with a story which should be adapted to awake a maternal feeling, and thus to allow us to observe the disposition of her mind towards her son. If this appeared auspicious, then another step might be taken. What this was to be, we could not agree upon. I proposed that Bruno himself should then write to his mother; but this Bear rejected, as a measure too startling and dangerous. He appeared rather to prefer making use of me as a mediator between mother and son. "It is a peculiarity of hers," he said, "that what she reads on paper, never operates very effectually on her feelings. She must read it in the eye, she must hear the voice, if the words are to reach her heart. You, my Fanny——"

"Thanks, my dear Bear, profoundest thanks, for your good intentions. But, if possible, let this commission be spared me. I feel that I have not the courage to place myself between these two violent spirits. I might very readily be crushed to pieces. Know you not the fable of the earthen pot?"

"Well, well, we will see. It is time enough to think of the second step, when the first has been taken."

"And for this I will immediately prepare myself; while you are in the town, I will select a fitting subject, or fabricate one."

"Good! And so we have the weapons ready for the occasion. But recollect, my little Fanny, the drift must not be too apparent. If Ma chère mère suspect a hidden object, she will set herself immediately against it."

"I will do my best, Bear. At all events, you shall peruse and criticise my story before we venture to read it to Ma chère mère."

During the night—one obtains the clearest ideas in the

dark—it became manifest to me what text I must avail myself of; and as soon as Bear was gone away in the morning, I took out of my bookcase, which Bear has famously supplied, "Fryxell's Stories from the Swedish History;" and began to read over and consider the narrative of Erik Stenbock and Malin Sture. The more I thought it over, the more satisfied I was with it; and scarcely had I gone through it a second time, when there came an invitation from Ma chère mère to spend the evening at Carlsfors, if we had nothing better to do. I returned thanks, and said we would come. Since this moment I have been nearly in a fever, and it was in the endeavour to relieve my restlessness that I have written this. Already this morning, before he left home, Bear wrote a few lines to Bruno to acquaint him with our plan. The answer which the messenger brought back, I had opened during Bear's absence. It contained only the words—"Do what you think best—Bruno."

Afternoon.

Bear has read the story, and is satisfied with it. We are setting out. Ah, Maria! this evening I am depressed and restless. I go to sound the depths of a heart, and on this moment how much depends! This thought lies painfully on mind and body. Adieu! adieu!

23rd.

We were at Carlsfors. It was evening. The lights stood on the green table in the drawing-room, and we sat around. The important and trying hour was come. I was in a strange state of mind, and all the others were unusually silent and dull. Bear had taken up a penknife, and, in want of something to do, began to cut into the table. Ma chère mère struck him lightly on the hand, and then gave him a bundle of pens to make. She then sate herself down to make a fish-net, which is her customary evening employment; for her eyes are not strong enough to bear any finer work. "And now, little wife," she said to me, "read something to us: but let it be only something that is cheerful. One has enough in the world here to grieve over, without having to cry over what one finds in books."

"I cannot promise," I replied, "that what I read shall be lively, but I think it very interesting; and what is more, it is in all its parts historically true."

"That is always a recommendation," said she, "and one must therefore adapt one's palate to the provision-basket."

I began—

ERIK STENBOCK AND MALIN STURE.

(From "Malin's Own Family Book.")

In the parish of Mörkö, in the province of Södermanland, in a deep running creek of the Baltic, lies a little triangular island. On this stood a rock ninety feet high, from which could be, far and wide, overlooked the fields, the crags, and the navigable waters which lay around. This island, in the early times, had been a resort of the Vikings; and deep caves were yet shown in the mountains which were believed to have been the dwellings of these people, or used by them as prisons. Some believe that it was here, in the time of Ingiald Illräda, that Granmar, the Fylkes-king of Södermanland, received the See-king, Hjorward Ylfing; and Granmar's daughter, the beautiful Hildegund, drank to Hjorward the health of Rolf Krake. The place is called Sjimonsö, which some explain to mean Seaman's Island. In later times it has received, from its form, the name of Hörningsholm; and has been, by embankments, gradually converted into a peninsula. It was successively in the possession of the families of Folkungs, Oernefots, of Ulfvs, and the younger Stures;—was strongly fortified, and often besieged, taken, and laid waste; the last time was in the reign of Christian the Tyrant.

Svante Sture, son of Sten Sture the younger, who was married to Martha Lejonhufvud, afterwards caused a castle to be erected on the old site; which was as noble a specimen of architecture as it was strong through its situation and fortifications. The castle rose, on many fathoms deep of foundation walls, four stories high, and was defended at the corners with strong towers. A conception of the wealth of Sture, and of the nobility of the time, may be formed when we read that at the wedding of Sigrid Sture with Thure Persson Bjelke, in the year 1562, fifty measures of wine, four tunns of mead, a tun and a half of must, twelve barrels of cherry brandy, twenty hogsheads of beer, forty-five oxen, two hundred sheep, twenty-one swine, seventeen calves, four hundred and fifty-three cans of honey, etc., were consumed. Through the confiscation of the church property, in parti-

cular, a great number of estates fell to the nobles, and especially to Sture, the sole heir of so many mighty families. Through this vast wealth, through the unspotted glory of Sture's name, the marriage alliance with Gustavus Wasa and the distinguished qualities of many of the children, the house of Hörningsholm stood long in the kingdom, second only to royalty ; and was the home of honour, pride, and joy. The joy vanished after the horrible Sture murder, in the year 1567 ; but Madame Martha maintained its pride, since the family had maintained its honour. Two surviving sons, and five daughters, promised also to restore the joy. During their minority, Madame Martha ruled the house of Hörningsholm and all its dependent estates, with a vigour and ability which obtained her the surname of King Martha. At the same time she distinguished herself by her magnanimity. Erik XIV. had murdered her husband and two of her sons. When, by the change of the dynasty, Erik's wife and children were dispersed through the country, without home and protection, Madame Martha took to her the daughter, Sigrid Wasa, then four or five years old, and brought her up with motherly tenderness and care.

"This history delights me," said Ma chère mère, as I paused a moment in the reading : "it is good!" Ma chère mère raised herself erect, and looked as proud as if she herself had been King Martha. I am persuaded that she felt herself related to her. I proceeded.

Erik Stenbock, the son of the old Gustavus Olsson of Torpa and of Brita Lejonhufvud, went often as a near relative to Hörningsholm, and became passionately attached to Miss Malin, the second of the string of daughters. She returned his passion ; but Madame Martha, on account of the near relationship, would not hear it even spoken of. They were, in fact, sisters' children. Stenbock sought to win his object by the ordinary means. He heaped presents on mother, sisters, and servants ; but all was in vain. Many were moved, but not the old Countess. She had taken the opinion, by letter, of Laurentius, the archbishop of Upsala, who stood firm by the declaration which he had made on the third marriage of Gustavus Wasa, and protested against the union. Upon this it became totally useless to speak further of it to the Countess. So passed many years. The lovers saw their

youth pass over; Erik had counted his thirty-fourth, and Malin her thirty-third year; at the same time, their mutual attachment continued as warm as ever. Every means to move the mother had been tried in vain, and they resolved at length to fly. Stenbock confided his purpose to the Duke Karl, of Södermanland, then in his twentieth year, and received from him, in support of his plan, a guard of two hundred cavalry.

In the month of March, 1573, he made a journey with his sister Cecilia, the wife of Gustavus Roos, to Hörningsholm; —concealed the cavalry not far from the castle, and instructed them what they had to do. The same evening Miss Malin consented to fly with him the next day. She passed a night of great anxiety. In the morning, as she was alone in the chamber, she fell on her knees in a window and prayed, shedding torrents of tears. At this moment the elder sister, Madame Sigrid, entered the room. "God bless you," said she: "you are engaged in a good business." "Would to God that it were good!" replied Miss Malin. "It is certainly good," said Madame Sigrid, "to pray to God with tears." "Ah!" exclaimed Malin, "if all my friends and relatives should cast me off, you will certainly not turn your true heart away from me?" "Why do you speak in that manner?" said Madame Sigrid: "none of the race of Sture have ever done anything on account of which one need turn one's heart from them."

At this moment the old Countess called Madame Sigrid to her, but Miss Malin went into another room. Erik entered it immediately, greeted those present, and said to Malin, "Dear sister, will you look at that horse which I have made you a present of? He stands below in the court." She consented, and he took her arm to conduct her down. As they went through the lower story, there sate Nils, and Anna Sture's nurse Lucy. Miss Malin begged them to follow her, which they did. Below, under the arch of the gateway, stood the horse harnessed to a sledge, in which the lady with her followers seated herself. Stenbock placed himself behind, and drove away, while many of the servants looked on, in the idea that it was merely a hunting excursion. But as the nurse observed that Master Erik took the way towards the sea, and drove so rapidly, she suspected mischief,

and began to cry out,—“ What are you about, my dear lady? Reflect, how angry your mother will be that you travel so unattended.” But Master Erik drew forth a blunderbuss, and set it to the breast of the nurse, with the words—“ Silence! or you have spoken your last!” On the shore below, the cavalry came suddenly forward, surrounded the sledge, and placed themselves on each side, and then away went they, as fast as the horses could gallop, to Svärdsbro. There were tailors and sewers with the richest stuffs of all kinds, who took the lady’s measure and began to make her clothes, while the cavalry kept guard round the house, so that no one could come in or go out. But exactly as Master Erik had made off towards the sea, Miss Margaret Sture had gone by chance to the window, saw, and comprehended their object. She began immediately to cry out, “ Master Erik is certainly carrying off my sister Malin!” At these words, the old Countess and Madame Sigrid sprang first to the window, and then down into the court. But upon the steps the mother fainted and fell down. When she was somewhat restored, she commanded Madame Sigrid to hasten at once after the fugitives, and to see if she could not bring them back. In the mean time sate Madame Martha on the steps in trouble and lamentation, and could not perfectly recover herself. There came hurrying, Master Erik’s sister, the Countess Cecilia Roos, and deplored that Master Erik should have acted so contrary to Madame Martha’s will, asserting that she had known nothing whatever of his intention; but at the same time never could have believed that Madame Martha would have taken it so ill. Madame Martha turned fiercely her head, and answered, “ God punish you and your brother, who has robbed me of my child. Hasten, at least, after her, and remain with her, that no shame befal her.” Madame Cecilia held her peace, and departed.

When Madame Sigrid, whom the mother had sent after the fugitives, arrived at Svärdsbro, it was only alone, and that with difficulty, that she was admitted into the house. There she began to relate to the sister the sorrow and lamentation of the mother, and to exhort her to return, in which case the mother had promised to forgive her. Miss Malin made no answer. Then began again Sigrid, and still more vehemently to exhort and to entreat her, or that she would be the death

of the mother. Malin said, "If you can assure me that the mother will at last consent to our union, then will I gladly go back." "That I cannot do," said Madame Sigrid. "Then," replied Malin, "the first error is just as good as the last;" and began bitterly to weep. When Madame Sigrid found she could not persuade her sister, she returned to Hörningsholm, where the mother was lying in bed in trouble and lamentings. Both were increased as Sigrid entered alone. Misfortune had before, but now disgrace had, fallen on the house. She could derive neither comfort nor help, nor even the hope of revenge. She was a lone widow, with many daughters; the sons were yet scarcely more than children. On the contrary, the carrier-off of her daughter was himself a mighty man, the brother of the queen-widow Catherine, supported by the Duke, and in favour with the King. Nevertheless, Madame Martha determined not to give way.

In the mean time journeyed Miss Malin with the Countess Cecilia Roos and Master Erik to his brother-in-law, Pehr Brahe, at Sundholm, in the province of Westgothland. There Erik left her, and hastened himself to Stockholm. But Madame Martha's letter of complaint had arrived there before him, and he was immediately deprived of his fiefs and offices, and placed in custody. There now arose an active mediation and sharp wranglings between the families Sture and Stenbock, which at length came to this conclusion, that Erik was again set at liberty. Thereupon he did all that was possible to win over to him the relations of Miss Malin, and he succeeded with all of them except the mother. He wrote to the Lutheran Academy at Rostock, and received thence the decision of the Theologians, which he forwarded to her, that marriages between sisters' children might be allowed; but she paid not the slightest regard to it.

Master Erik and Miss Malin now despaired of ever being able to soften her; it was now a year and a quarter since their elopement; they passed over the Hällandish borders, were there married by a Danish priest, and returned the same day to Torpa, where the wedding was celebrated. At the same time it was arranged that King John, the Queen-widow, the Duke Karl, the Princesses, the Council of the kingdom, and all the relations of Stenbock, should write to Madame Martha, and entreat for Master Erik and his wife.

But the grief and the wrath of the mother were now only the more aggravated by the news of this marriage, which had taken place without her knowledge, and spite of all the solicitations on their behalf, she would listen to nothing more respecting either her daughter or her son-in-law.

Here I paused a moment, in order to sound the bottom of Ma chère mère's heart. "Is it really possible," I said, "that such stubbornness can exist? How can any one be so unbending and irreconcilable!"

"It is unreasonable!" said Jean Jacques.

"It is irrational!" said Jane Marie.

"It is unnatural!" growled Bear, with a horrible grimace.

"It is right!" cried Ma chère mère, with a voice of thunder. "It is no more than right. I would have done the same myself!"

"O no! that would you not indeed!" said I, while I looked at her imploringly.

"Upon my soul! I would have done it!" said she yet more violently, and smote her fist on the table so that the lights tottered. "Yes, that would I; and if even thou, Fransiska, hadst been the offender, and I thy real mother! Yes, I would thus punish thee. Thou shouldst never again come into my sight, no! not even if the king himself fell down at my feet, and implored it. 'Easy mother, bad habits. Strict mother, good habits!'"

My heart swelled within me. I felt the extravagance of Ma chère mère's notions, but the words—"wert thou the offender, and I thy real mother," produced the most singular effect on me. They converted me at once into the unhappy Malin, and put me into her situation. I suffered with, I deplored her; deeply I felt all the horror of a mother's wrath, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I could read what follows.

"The mother's resentment lay in the mean time heavy on the heart of the daughter. Since her flight from Hörningsholm, Malin had never yet worn anything but mourning. She had received from her husband a multitude of jewels, but she had never needed them. She wrote continually the most sorrowful letters to her next of kin, praying them to use their influence in her behalf. The incessant prayers of her sons and sons-in-law, and at length the whole of the daughters

throwing themselves at her feet, softened Madame Martha, and she gave permission for the two outcast ones to return."

Here Ma chère mère let fall her net, leaned back in the sofa, crossed her arms, and bowed her head upon her bosom, as it seemed to me in deep attention. I observed all this with a hasty glance, and proceeded.

"It was now a year and a half since their marriage, and nearly three since their flight. They were not, however, allowed to proceed at once to the castle, but must inhabit for some weeks the little Bathhouse. At length, through the entreaties of the brothers and sisters, and on account of the approach of winter and the ill health of Malin, they were permitted to enter the castle. Malin was conducted into the great hall, where Madame Martha was seated in the chair of state, and all the children stood around. As Malin appeared at the door, the mother exclaimed, 'Ah! thou unhappy child!' Then fell Malin on her knees, and so crept forward to her mother, imploring forgiveness with tears, and laying her head against her knee."

I paused; for my voice trembled, and tears were nigh. My heart was in that of Malin. At this moment Ma chère mère pushed the table from her, arose, and with a pallid countenance, and without casting a glance at any of us, marched with great strides out of the room, and banged the door behind her.

We sate altogether startled and confounded. We knew not what to think. Was Ma chère mère angry? or was she moved? Did she suspect our object? or— Bear and I looked inquiringly at one another. I was angry with myself, and with the emotion which had occasioned me to interrupt the reading at so eventful a moment. Ma chère mère through this had had time for reflection, and now she could not hear the best part of the history—that beautiful ending of it! Oh, if she could but have heard it! It must have made her feel how beautiful it is to be reconciled, and King Martha's example would probably have operated with her. I longed inexpressibly for her return. But one quarter of an hour went by after another, and Ma chère mère came not back. Very mournful was I, as supper was announced; at the same time it was announced that Ma chère mère would not come to table. She had headache, and was already gone to bed, wishing

had a good supper, and a good night. I was restless and out of humour, and Bear was the same. We knew not what to think of the position of things. Immediately after supper we took leave of Jean Jacques and Jane Marie. On our way home we became rather less dissatisfied with our evening. Our attempt could not be said to have totally failed. The reading had produced a powerful effect; and the excitement which Ma chère mère had shown, might with greater probability receive a good than a prejudicial interpretation. We resolved that Bear should the next day, under colour of business with Jean Jacques, drive to Carlsfors, and discover how it stood with Ma chère mère. We talked of the principles of severity which she maintained. I did battle against them. I asserted that it is not irreconcilable severity, but rather wisdom and love, which introduce into a family virtue, purity of manners, and peace on earth.

"That is the beautiful doctrine of our time, Fanny," answered Bear; "but Ma chère mère belongs to a period in which the higher classes endeavoured by an overdriven severity to make an embankment against the growing demoralization of the multitude. She was educated in the strictest principles. Nature and circumstances have co-operated, in addition, to confirm and harden her in them. The ground itself is good, it is simply the one-sided conception and application—Heavens! we are already at home!"

To-day, Bear went as agreed to Carlsfors. Ma chère mère was not to be seen; still kept her chamber; and announced through Elsa that she could see no one. What will come of it? Bruno will certainly come hither this evening; would that we had more agreeable intelligence for him!

August 28th.

I have not written to you for several days. I have been so restless. There is no change in Ma chère mère since I wrote. Jean Jacques, who with the acquiescence of Bruno is made acquainted with all relating to the matter, sends us daily intelligence. Ma chère mère will see no one, continues shut up in her chamber, and all within is silent as the grave. Elsa alone passes in and out like a shadow, and answers all inquiries with a shake of the head. Bruno has visited us every day in the most miserable state of mind. He comes

as the evening closes in, asks the same questions, receives the same answers, and goes away with the thunderbolt expanded on his temple, his eyebrows drawn closely together, and his gloomy gaze rivetted on the earth. Sometimes by night we hear, on the wind from Ramm, the sorrowful but beautiful sounds which once delighted me so much on Svanö. They rise and sink like mysterious sighs. It seems then to me as if there hovered over the water a spirit banished from bliss, and which would communicate to me its torments. I would on no account that Serena should hear these sounds. They pierce deep into the heart; and to avoid weeping, I am obliged to bury my head in the pillow.

Serena! Oh, she has probably already heard more than is for her quiet. But what I know not. It is singular that she should not let me know; and she is by no means of a reserved character. She came last evening with her grandparents. The good old people came, they said, to thank me for her. I thanked them for her. Gull-gul was with them, and ought also to have expressed his thanks, upon which we joked merrily. But the little fool was not so true as usual to his mistress, but flew restlessly in and out of the window; at length he took his way across the lake to Svanö, and we lost sight of him. We waited, in expectation of his return, but in vain. It grew late; and Serena, anxious about her little favourite, betook herself to Svanö, in order to entice him back. But she stayed long, far too long, out. We became uneasy on her account—I most of all; for I know not what presentiment it was which said to me, “Bruno has part in this delay.” I could endure no longer to remain in this uncertainty; but whispering a word in Bear’s ear, left him to entertain our venerable guests, ran to the shore, took a little boat, and proceeded in quest of Serena. I arrived on Svanö precisely at the right moment, to receive Serena half dead in my arms, and to see Bruno standing there more like a pillar of salt than a living man. I led Serena to the house. On the way she recovered herself, and the deathlike stillness resolved itself into a flood of tears. She wept so excessively and so passionately that I was beside myself. “Has this man insulted you, Serena? I will detest, I will not know any more of him!”

“Oh no, no!” answered Serena; “but—he is so unhappy!”

I could learn nothing more from her, deeply excited as she was. Gull-gul flew twittering between us. I had been quite grieved about the little creature. I rowed slowly on purpose that Serena might weep at her leisure. It was growing dark as we arrived. The old people, contented to have their darling again, made no inquiries after the cause of her stay. She became more composed, and the twilight concealed her tearful eyes. To-day I have received a note from her by Bear, in which she tells me that she is quite calm again, and begs me "not to be uneasy on her account, and at present to ask nothing; in a while I shall know all." For the rest, she writes so kindly, so cordially, it is impossible to be angry with her. But it is singular that we should both have secrets which we keep from one another, and both of them secrets which concern Bruno.

Later.

Bruno was here just now, dark as ever. He went away with a wild look, saying, "I shall not come again. If any change takes place, let me know it." He left us without an adieu.

It is now six days since the evening on which I read the history of Erik Stenbock and Malin Sture, and Ma chère mère remains the same. Ah! what will be the end of these things. God help us!

A STRANGER LADY TO THE READER, BUT ESPECIALLY
TO THE YOUNG LADY READER.

Young maiden, who hast merely gone botanizing into the land of Romance, and there picked up thy knowledge of men and of the world; who on thy entrance into society anticipatest with a fearful pleasure that the men will busy themselves about thee, either as the butterfly about the rose, or the spider about the fly—a word to thee. Be at rest: the world is not so dangerous. The men have too much to do with themselves. Thou wilt have to experience that they will inquire no more after thee than after the moon, and sometimes even less. Thou armest thyself, thou of seventeen years, to resist the storm of life; ah! thou wilt probably come to have more to do with its inaction. But let not thy courage fail; there are life and love in the world in richest

abundance, but not often in the form in which they for the most part are exhibited in romances. The romancer distils life : he makes a day out of ten years, and out of a hundred grains of corn draws one drop of spirit : it is his trade. The reality proceeds in another manner. Rarely come the great events, the powerful scenes of passion. They belong, in every-day life, not to the rule, but to the exceptions. On that account, thou good creature ! sit not and wait, or thou wilt suffer tedium. Seek not the affluence of life without thee ; create it in thy own bosom. Love ! love the Heaven, Nature, Wisdom, all that is good around thee, and thy life will become rich ; the sails of its air-ship will fill with the fresh wind, and so gradually soar up to the native regions of light and love.

But why am I saying all this ? In truth, because, in order to help Madame Werner with her every-day story—she wished to make a romance of it, but it was not her lot,—I must now sketch one of those exception scenes, which occur oftener in books than in life itself.

It was evening, and one of those evenings in which a loving peace breathes throughout nature, and man is involuntarily led to a feeling and sentiment of that day in which all yet was good. Glowing and pure, the vault of heaven expanded itself over the earth ; and the earth stood like a gothic-crowned and happy bride, beneath the bride-canopy, smiling, still, and in full beauty. The sun shone upon golden corn and ruddy fruits. Thick-foliaged and hushed, the trees mirrored themselves in the clear lake. Light mists swept like veils around the heights. Here rose the twitter of a bird, and there the song of a child. All seemed full of enjoyment.

It was then that Serena's light bark, like a leaf branch with its blossom, floated softly over the quiet waters. Then was it, too, that an eye looking from the grey Ramm, with a telescope, directed itself towards the innocent Rosenvik. Bruno sees the little bark push from the shore ; guesses whom it bears ; and an inexpressible yearning, a mighty desire fills his soul. That tempestuous heart which long had beaten in wild disquiet, that scorched-up feeling which through days and nights of agony had preyed on itself, panted after refreshment and repose. There is a simoom, more burning than that

of the African deserts; there is a fountain more quickening and thirsted after than those of the oases of these deserts. Bruno is the pilgrim, consumed with the fire of torturing feeling; Svanö is the oasis in whose bosom bubbles the fresh waters of life. For she is there—she with the pure heart, with the clear, heavenly glance—and in the presence of her, of the gentle woman, in Serena's presence, Bruno yearn after rest, after life, longs—and—sails forth.

“Hast thou entered into the treasure-chambers of the snow? or hast thou seen how the light parteth itself? Hast thou entered into the caverns of the sea? Hast thou wandered through the abysses of the deep?”

Well might the unfathomable Creator of Nature and of the human heart thus ask; and well might the earthly inquirer, like Job, lay his hand on his mouth, and be still. Into the depths of the human heart, more than into any other, it is the Eternal eye alone which can penetrate, and behold how the light springs up, and how night and storm come!

Bruno was like the climate under the Line. A stream of fire went through his soul, and under its influence lay all its feelings. Hence now this dead quiet, and then again this raging tempest with its devastating power; hence also this luxury of feeling, life, and love, which sometimes burst forth so mightily, and like the rapid vegetation of a lava-scorched soil, and like love itself, buries in its breast all traces of violence and offence. And thus it happened that, in the beauty of the evening, sailing over the quiet waters to the little island where goodness and peace had now made their home, Bruno gathered a tempest into his bosom, and felt burning sensations pass through his soul like jagged lightnings. A secret wrath against somewhat, an infinite desire after something, a fever, a torment, glowed fiercely in his bosom. There are words which can annihilate, flames which can make blessed—he stands on the margin of the little island, like the spirit of a volcano.

Serena stood beneath an oak. Above that light and beautiful seraph head the lofty boughs stretched themselves lovingly. There lay a cloud of sadness on her innocent brow; and, sadly smiling, looked she at Gull-gul, which at the inviting tones of her voice now descended from branch to

branch, and finally alighted on her hand. But suddenly he flew in alarm away, and Bruno's dark tall form stood before her. She blushed, she trembled; but continued still, and looked up to him with her clear Madonna gaze. Bruno looked on her, and his soul became calmer; that inexpressible pleasure diffused itself over his mind, which he never experienced but in her presence. But this feeling fell now like a rose upon glowing coals;—for a moment mitigated, in the next that fire drew fresh nutriment from it.

"Will you also fly me? Will you too cast me from you?" asked he, with his dark flaming eyes fixed on her. And, as she still gazed on him with an inquiring and troubled look, he said, "Serena! speak to me one friendly word. My soul needs it."

"Friend of my childhood!" said Serena, with her angel's voice; and extended to him her hand.

"O Serena!" said he, while he raised her hand to his lips, "hear me; I must speak with you! Seat yourself beside me. You will not? Will you then not bestow a moment on the friend of your childhood?"

There was in his look so much of beseeching, so much of anguish, that Serena could not resist it; she seated herself on a moss-covered stone. He placed himself before her on his knees; there was something childlike, something tender and mild, in his whole bearing. He gazed on her, and the fire in his eyes melted into a feeling of inexpressible tenderness: tears glittered there. He spoke not, but on his fine lips lay fiery and sweet thoughts. They opened, and he thus besought her:

"Say *thou* to me, Serena! O say *thou*, as then, when we were children!—children, happy children; bridegroom and bride!"

Tears bedewed Serena's depressed eyelids, but she hesitated.

"Say *thou!*" implored Bruno, more vehemently, more fiercely. "Serena! good, lovely Serena! call me *thou!*"

Serena hesitated still. Deeply did she feel the consequence of this word, and of this moment.

"You will not?" exclaimed Bruno, with pain, as he arose, his mild look giving way to one of gloomy flame. "Serena! then am I totally indifferent to you?"

"Oh no, no!" replied Serena deeply moved.

"Not?" began Bruno again fierily, and seized her hand.
"O Serena! torture me no longer. Leave me not in this
rending doubt. Oh, speak! Will, can Serena love me?"

Serena looked at him with tearful eyes, and said, "Yes."
Her whole soul lay in this answer.

"Oh, then must you become mine, heavenly being," ex-
claimed Bruno, embracing her knees with passionate joy.
"Serena, thou wilt, thou must become mine! Tremble not.
Spurn me not from thee, noble and adored angel! Obey thy
heart, listen to my love, and happiness shall be thy lot upon
earth. Wherefore tremblest thou? When thou wast a child,
I carried thee about in my arms through the woods of Ramm,
and sprang with thee over many a gulf, then thou didst not
tremble. Oh! as in the days of thy childhood, will I bear
thee my whole life through in my arms, and hold thee
securely to my bosom. Let every doubt, every uncertainty,
vanish in this moment; we will bind fate with our affection.
Serena, give me now thy troth! swear to become mine;
swear that henceforth nothing shall separate us."

"Bruno! Bruno!" said Serena, terrified with his vehe-
mence, "have you forgotten——your mother——my pa-
rents?"

"Forgotten? No! I have not forgotten them, nor those
customs and usages which lay the life of the heart in bondage.
I have not forgotten them; but they bind me not. I acknow-
ledge a higher power than theirs, I know a higher world than
that in which they rule and fetter. But I understand thy
anxiety. Like the flower on the island here, hast thou
grown up, till thou hast ceased to feel and believe that there
is a world beyond it. But the world is great, Serena; and
for two hearts which beat in unison, there are a hundred open
paradises. There are finer climes than this in which thou
wert born; other religions, other manners—but the sun and
love rule everywhere. I have seen this more beautiful world.
I have seen there the life free from fetters—millions of beings
live in this atmosphere of freedom, and obey only the dictates
of the heart——"

"And were they happy, Bruno? were they contented,
these beings who had renounced all the commands of heaven,
all the bonds of duty? Were you yourself happy in this
world which you extol so highly?"

“ Happy!—no, that was I not; because I had found no Serena. But now—oh, hear me, Serena! and reflect that my life depends upon thy answer. If everything should oppose itself to our union, wilt thou not, despite of all, yet become mine? Or say, what better can life offer thee than boundless love? Life, Serena, is poor, is miserable, when love exalts it not. That Almighty Being who implanted in us the necessity of happiness, he has not commanded us to renounce it. He who kindled the leading star of love in the heart, cannot desire that we should contemn its guidance. Serena, I love thee! I will lay my soul in thy hand, and say, ‘ Do with it what thou wilt, but be mine for ever!’ Oh, let me conduct thee out of this narrow corner of the world, where thy life will wither and fade away; let me introduce thee to a life of freedom and joy. Give me thy hand, as thou hast given me thy heart; become in another country, under a fairer heaven, my wife. Thy path shall be strewn with roses; riches shall be at thy command; thou shalt open thy hand, and make men happy; and I will thank thee for all, for everything, with a love which shall have no counterpart on earth. I will create thee a Paradise out of whatever is beautiful in nature, and what is good and joyful in life. Serena, what canst thou there find wanting?”

“ Peace!” answered Serena as she arose, and her bosom laboured with desperate emotion—“ peace with myself! peace with heaven!”

“ So!” said Bruno slowly, as he also arose, and fixed his flashing eyes with an indescribable expression of scornful reproach on Serena—“ so, Serena, thou also art but one of the ordinary tribe of women! Thy love is but a house-lamp, a faint and timid flame, which can only burn in a well-closed room. Thou wilt not make me happy—thou wilt not follow the dictates of thy heart, since thou tremblest for thy eternal salvation! Thou wilt not make the slightest offering for him who is ready to sacrifice everything for thee. And this is called virtue! Oh! weak, miserable selfishness! But listen”—and he approached her with a daring wildness—“ I will teach thee that which love, true love, is! And yet perhaps thou dost not understand me, pious maiden. Knowest thou what sacrifice he who truly loves can make without a thought? Yes, even his eternal happiness! Oh! that thou wert doomed to the deepest and most fiery gulf of hell! I

would, with boundless joy, plunge myself in, that I might be damned with thee, and there with thee, with thee in the bottomless abyss, I would despise the thunders, and the felicity of heaven! But thou comprehendest me not—thou knowest not what love is!"

Serena leaned her forehead on her hand; a terrible convulsion raged in her spirit. Night and lightnings alternated there. Ah! Serena knew what true love was, and Bruno's words found an echo in her soul. For a moment its transparency became clouded, and the mighty consequences of this sacrifice were no longer clear in it. In a feeling of inexpressible anguish she raised her eyes and her clasped hands towards heaven, and spoke as if unconsciously. "They would be miserable; they would get up in the morning and find me not; they would go to bed with tears for their child!"

Bruno saw that which was passing in her heart. Demoniac powers took possession of his soul, and they exulted as they saw her waver; and in his eyes were flames, and in his voice a tone, boldly insinuating—before such, angels have fallen!

"Oh, Serena! let no childish weakness misguide thee, to belie thy own heart. Be strong, be true to thy love, and confide in me. Be mine, and I will recompense every pain, I will change every sigh which disturbs thee into happiness. Away with pusillanimous fear! Conquer, conquer, my Serena, the ordinary weakness of thy sex. Give me that assurance, that oath which will elevate me above all the changes of fortune, all the menaces of fate; which will confer a home on the banished, blessings on the cursed, and peace on my heart. Oh, my Serena! why hesitate, why waver? Art thou not already mine? Have not our souls been united ever since our childhood? Are they not now warmed with one flame? Serena, we are already one! one before Him who poureth his love into our hearts. Or, dost thou believe that they could be separated? Never, Serena! beloved as my own life, thou art mine! mine!"

He had seized her hand; with a passionate and irresistible force he drew her closer to his bosom. There are hidden, marvellous inspirations, through which the tempted but pure spirit receives strength to triumph over even that which is dearest to it. It was such which sprung up in Serena's soul, and filled it at once with desperation and divine light. To

resist Bruno's power, she must tear herself loose from him ; and to his words—"Thou art mine, mine!" she answered shuddering,—“No, I love you not!”

“Thou mayst think so,” exclaimed Bruno with a demoniac smile, “but thou deceivest thyself.” He embraced her, pressed his hand on her heart, and proceeded with a triumphant expression—“Thou lovest me, as I love thee ! By the beating of this heart I swear, that if thou refusest me, this love will blanch thy cheek, and my misery will become thine. In vain dost thou resist me ; in vain dost thou deceive thyself. As certain as thy heart beats beneath my hand, has a higher power united our fates. Resist it not. It is in vain, Serena : thou art mine !”

Serena stood motionless ; her dark eyelashes sunk upon her pale cheeks ; fainter and fainter beat her heart beneath Bruno's burning hand ; yet, like the whispering of a spirit, clear, soft, awfully and marvellously penetrating, issued from her lips the words, “No, I love thee not !”

An icy chill went through Bruno's veins. A voice like this, words thus pronounced, he had never yet experienced ; and Serena leaned like a marble image on his breast, so cold, so still, so—dead. He released her ; he gazed on her with a wild dismay. “I love thee not !” repeated Serena, and stepped backward, her cheeks assuming every moment a more deathly paleness, her heart beating ever fainter.

“Serena !” shouted Bruno, with a voice which might have awakened the dead from their everlasting sleep. Serena sighed deeply, deeply. “No, I love thee not !” repeated she yet again, with a firmer and clearer tone. Her knees failed her ; she would have fallen to the ground if Fransiska had not arrived at that moment, and received her into her arms.

BRUNO TO SERENA.

Yet once more these words !—Speak them once again, and no sigh of love or pain on my part shall ever disturb your quiet more. But, Serena! if you deceived me, if you deceived yourself in that moment, if your heart abjures the words which your lips spoke, then hear me yet this once. My impetuosity wounded you. Forgive me this, Serena ; it is now passed, I am quiet · and at the same time, this restless, this thirsting heart yearns

for the belief that it beats not alone ! and if unworthy of it, will I still believe that I am beloved. I stand on the crisis of my life. Love alone can save me. I have a mother ; I have trespassed against her, and she has cursed me. I hope not for reconciliation with her, although I seek it. If this be denied me, shall I then despair, Serena ? Will no dear heart bind me fast to life ? Will no angel follow me into the wilderness ? O Serena ! dost thou love me, and hast thou not courage to share my fate ? See, I will not adorn the prospect of our future ; I will not invite thee to share happiness and joy ; I call thee to a participation of sorrow and tears. Perhaps our future may be dark ; perhaps thy heart may never find peace on my bosom ; perhaps, even thy cheeks blanch beneath my kisses, but yet—yet I ask thee, Serena, hast thou not courage, not love enough, with me, and for me, to suffer ? Serena ! there are sufferings, sufferings to the death, which are not bitter, which possess their own great, their marvellous enjoyment. Great is the power of love, even to make happy the night of pain. Yet how ? When the rejected one breathes peacefully at thy side ; when his eye, through thee, raises itself towards a heaven where dwell mercy and love, and when this eye then rests on thee with infinite thanks and blessings—Serena, couldst thou then be unhappy ? And if even thy cheek grew pale, if thou leanedst thy head against a bosom which was filled with thee alone ; and if in death thy gaze met a look of unspeakable love, which living only in thee, with thee will be extinguished, and on reawaking seek only thee ?—Oh, Serena ! together to love, to suffer, to enjoy, together to die, to be one here and beyond the grave,—this was my dream as I saw thee. Was it a dream ? Oh, Serena ! was it a dream which I felt as the reality of my existence, as the solution of its yet uncomprehended enigma ? Serena ! answer me with the truth which lived so beautifully on thy childish lips,—I ask once more, was it a dream ? Say no ! and be mine. Or repeat your last words.

SERENA TO BRUNO.

No, Bruno ! I will not repeat those words ! They were not the truth. It was the fear of my own weakness which called them forth. If it can do you good, Bruno—if it can be

a solace to your heart, then receive my assurance—I love you ! To share life and sorrow with you would be happiness for me. But, Bruno, hear this my last word. I write to you by the bed of my grandparents' rest. They slumber softly; my voice has soothed them to repose. The light of the lamp falls on their reverence-inspiring heads, and illuminates their grey hairs. Bruno, here is my post, and I will not move from it, let my heart suffer what it will. To make glad and peaceful the life of the two aged parents, who have cherished my childhood and my whole life till now, that is my office and my dearest duty. The lamp which enlightens the evening of their days, Providence has placed in my hands, and I will protect it faithfully to my last sigh. O Bruno ! if you will win me, you must first win these. Only when they can with joy lay my hand in yours, can I joyfully and confidently consent to it. The way to me is through them.

And if this must be for you a parting salutation, then fare you well, Bruno ! God bless you ! Wherever your path may lead, think that a true and sympathising heart follows you with blessings and prayers.

Bruno ! friend of my childhood ! I would say something which should give you peace. I fear that you deem me cold and indifferent. That pains me. But I know that there is another and a better world; there will you better read my heart—there will you pardon your

SERENA.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M——.

Rosenvik, August 31st.

FOR two days after I last wrote to you we waited in great uneasiness; but as not the slightest change in the state of Ma chère mère was made known to us, Bear proceeded to Carls fors, and spoke sternly to Elsa, so as to make her talk. Then spoke she out plainly, that Ma chère mère was very much the same as she was fifteen years ago. She does not sleep of nights, speaks not, eats and drinks next to nothing. She has the room kept dark, sits constantly with her face pressed on her hand, and sighs sometimes as if her heart would break.

For the rest, she has forbidden Elsa to speak a word to any one concerning her.

"This must not continue," exclaimed Bear, when he had related these particulars. "It may become a relapse into the old complaint. We must by some means break the spell, and this must be done—through you, Fanny."

"Through me?" I exclaimed, starting back. I am persuaded that I was pale as death.

"Yes, through you! You know well, you sea-cat, that no one stands so well with Ma chère mère as you. No one possesses so much influence over her heart. Use it now. You must break through her door, and into her bosom. Yes; you must do it, and you must also go as boldly and as circumspectly about it as a thief in the night."

"But the picklock, Bear, the picklock! How am I to pass through her bolted doors, and into her more bolted heart?"

"Through her doors?—Elsa will leave them open for you. I have spoken with her about it. And how into her heart? Let your own become warm, and your tongue will find words which will penetrate through bone and marrow."

"Ah, Bear!"

"And you must not permit yourself to be frightened away by any hasty expressions, by any angry look. Have courage; be steadfast, strong, and tender. Think on Bruno! Think on the reconciliation of mother and son! Yes, just so must you look, just so must you feel, and you will achieve a good work, Fanny; or, at least, will force this gloomy pain to effusion, which, if it continue as it is, will conduct her to madness."

Sweet is the voice of flattery, and especially when one hears it from one's better-half. I suffered myself to be persuaded to dare the attempt; but courageous was I by no means. To force myself into Ma chère mère's chamber, contrary to her most positive command, and to appear before her—hu!

We determined further, that Bruno during my interview should wait in Jean Jacques' room, so that, if it took an auspicious turn, he might immediately throw himself at his mother's feet. Should a kindly sentiment be excited in her heart, we must not give it time to cool—we must strike while the iron is hot. Bear wrote to Bruno on this proposition,

who answered merely with these words—"I agree with you, and will be there." The next day was fixed for the fearful interview. No sleep came that night into my eyes, and I was once on the very point of waking Bear, and telling him that I really had not the courage to "sit between" in the affair. But I heard again the wonderful, sorrowful tones from the unhappy anchorite at Ramm. They sounded imploringly. I recollect Bruno's tears, and his prayer—"Reconcile me with my mother;" and I determined firmly to submit myself to Bear's requiring: but I was still in a thousand troubles how I should carry the matter through. "I should say what my heart dictated," said Bear; but my head would also play its part, and act the tutor of the heart, and reject its somewhat uncertain plan, and prescribe speeches with which the heart had nothing to do. So disputed head and heart till the moment that we must set out. My situation was by no means to be envied, but I said nothing to Bear; I would not disquiet him with my own disquiet.

We set out. It was Sunday. The bells rung with such a friendly solemnity through the quiet air. Country people in holiday garb, with Prayer-books in their hands, met us on the way. They looked so peaceful, so contented, as they went to the temple of the Lord. I envied them; and the nearer we approached Carlsfors, the farther I wished myself from it. As Bear took my hand to help me from the carriage, I trembled in every limb. The cunning Bear said nothing, asked nothing, but only pressed my hand.

Bruno was already with Jean Jacques. I was terrified at his paleness, and at the change in his appearance; but I said nothing. He also was silent. Jane Marie was, as I fancy, somewhat offended, on account of the greater trust which had been put in me, and said something of having "too much self-confidence." Oh, my God! that now I certainly had not. I had rather have been in Mesopotamia keeping sheep than thus to step before Ma chère mère as a mediator. After we had talked awhile about nothing and with long pauses between, Bear fixed on me his still, solemn gaze. There was legible in it "Now!" I arose. I regarded myself as a sacrifice. Tremblingly I made some steps towards the door. Suddenly I found myself in Bruno's arms, who, with his deep, powerfully penetrating tone, said—"A

blessing on thy proceeding ! Blessed be the words of peace on thy lips ! My life depends upon them ! ” And the singular man pressed me passionately to his bosom, and his tears fell on my brow. I stood there surprised and moved as Bruno drew me to him, kissed me, and said softly and fervently—“ God bless thee ! ”

He did so. From this moment, all fear, all reluctance, left me. I was totally changed. My heart became strong ; and with firm and light steps I advanced to the room where Ma chère mère sate in her darkness. I threw out no further plan as to what I should say or do ; I left it all to the inspiration of the moment.

Before the door of the boudoir stood Elsa, motionless, silent, and like a mummy. She gave me a sign that she understood my purpose, and wished me success. She had left the door open, and I glid softly into the boudoir. It was empty and dark. The blinds were let down. Softly I opened the door of the sleeping-room ; and as I entered that great dark chamber, I was shocked to see Ma chère mère lying on the floor. At my entrance she raised her head, and looked at me with a gaze so wild and disordered that I shuddered. Yet I drew some steps nearer, and said with a tender uneasiness, “ Is Ma chère mère unwell ? ” She raised herself completely on her feet, and the cap seemed to lift itself on her head. She rushed towards me, her nose contracted and pale, her breath whistling, and her whole bearing so menacing, that she must have terrified one less brave than I was at this moment.

“ How darest thou to break into my chamber ? How canst thou dare to disturb me ? ” demanded she, wild and stern, as she drew near me.

“ I did not find Ma chère mère without, and therefore I came hither,” said I, as composedly as possible, and without giving back a step. She gazed at me a moment, while she seemed to collect herself; after which she said quietly, and as it were to herself: “ I had probably forgotten to bolt the door—stupid ! ” She went away from me ; opened the drawer of a bureau, and appeared as though she would lay something in it which she held in her hand, but she let it fall en the floor, and it rolled towards me. I stooped and took it up. Ma chère mère approached me with the expression

of a hyæna, and wished, I fancy, to snatch it out of my hand but I regarded attentively the little medallion on which the lovely head of a child was painted, and said with a degree of ease which I now can scarcely comprehend, “ What a beautiful child !”

Ma chère mère stood still. She appeared highly excited, yet in a softer mood. She took the medallion gently out of my hand, but held it so that I might observe it with her, and said—“ Yes, yes, indeed a lovely child. Ah ! the crown of all children ! Dost thou know the name of the boy, Fransiska—dost thou know his name ? Dost thou know whose child he was ? Say ! Dost thou know it ; dost thou know it ?”

She looked with a keen inquiring glance into my face. I was obliged to cast down my eyes before her penetrating gaze, as I answered “ No !” according to the literal truth, though I guessed who it was.

“ His name was Bruno,” began Ma chère mère. “ He was my only son ! Mine, mine——” and here she pressed my shoulders together between her hands till I thought she would have crushed them. “ He was my only son,” continued she, as she withdrew her hands from me and raised them towards heaven—“ to-day is the day on which I gave him birth.” She was silent ; and then proceeding again as if speaking to herself, and with an expression which rent my soul—“ This day three-and-thirty years I gave him birth. With deadliest pangs I gave him life ! Oh, that I had died at that moment ! for he ! oh !——but he was my pride, my proud joy, my boast, my all ! He was more to me than God ! Oh ! the Lord has smitten down my pride——no, not he, but the devil. The devil smote my strength, and took my child. Oh ! children give to our hearts life and death ; mine gave worse than death.” Here she crossed her arms over her breast, and sunk her head low, as if crushed to the earth with sorrow. As she raised herself again, she turned to me with a sharp, penetrating look, and said, “ Thou knowest what has happened, Fransiska. Thou knowest all about him. Deny it not. Thy husband knows it, and man and wife are one. Thou knowest it : I see it in the bottom of thy soul !”

I did not deny it ; my look spoke for me. I drew near to Ma chère mère ; my heart was warmed towards her ; she laid her hand on my shoulder, and said, “ God protect thee,

Fransiska, from ever suffering what I have suffered; from feeling that which I have felt, and that which I now feel. God preserve thee from it! Child! child! it is not good when the heart of a mother is converted into hate against that to which she once gave life, when her bosom must repel that which once drew its nutriment thence—I tell thee it is not good. What wishes the happy mother for her children? That they may live long on the earth; that they may settle near, and dwell around her; that they may receive her last breath, and close her eyelids when her last hour is come. Yes, that wishes she. But what do I wish for my only son? Yes, that—” and her countenance assumed a terrible expression—“ that he may be dead; that he may lie deep in the earth, or at the bottom of the sea; that these eyes may never more see him; these ears may never hear his voice! Oh! that he were dead, dead, dead!”

I shuddered at these wild and desperate words, and in the highest state of excitement of mind the wretched mother proceeded.

“ If the son goes from the father’s house into the wide world, what does the mother give him with him on his long journey? She gives him blessings; she gives him the best the house contains with him, and she follows him to the door with tears, and kisses, and names full of love. Yes, this does she; but to my only son gave I my curse. That was all, besides his life, which he carried with him from me into the wide, wild world. I cursed my only child! Seest thou,” she continued, with ever-growing wildness, “ I had laid upon his head all my love, my honour, my pride,—and he heaped shame upon mine. Shame heaped he on the head of his mother. See!” and she rent the cap from her head and cast it fiercely on the floor, while the grey, yes, nearly snow-white hair fell down in waves on her shoulders—“ see! grief has strown its ashes on my hair. Before, it was black, but in one night fell snow—it is now become white. The son has bleached the hair of his mother. He caused that the people pointed with the finger at her, and said—‘ See! she was the mother of a thief!’ Ought she not to curse him?”

“ Ah! he was yet so young”—I stammered forth—“ he”—I could scarcely speak. Ma chère mère heard me not, but went on, addressing rather herself than me. “ Yes,

my hair became grey ; but what did not become grey ! my colour, my soul, the who'le world ! When the curse was pronounced, and the cursed one was gone forth, and no one knew whither,—then came a wondrous time. It became dark in me, and I sat in the dark ; and days—months—years went round, and I knew only that all was dark——dark as the crime, and the curse ! I thought that the spark of life would perish in the darkness ; but it was stronger than the darkness, and than care—and I issued from the darkness, and beheld the light again. I learned at least to bear. I sought to forget him, I thought——he is dead !”

My tears flowed ; my whole soul was broken with emotion ; and I exclaimed, “Oh, the unhappy one ! He wandered about an outcast, and found perhaps neither bread nor a home. He died, perhaps, on foreign ground, and thought of his mother, and yearned to press her hand to his lips, and to receive pardon. And she——oh, the poor——!”

Ma chère mère was deadly pale, and trembled violently ; she seemed with difficulty to breathe. “Fransiska !” she said at length with a strong voice, “Fransiska ! cease these unnecessary lamentations ! Bread, he needed not want. He could work. He was a man, and already in his growing years strong as a lion. Home ?—that he did not seek. His mind drew him towards the wild world, and that has probably yielded him sufficient. But the curse”—here she approached me, while tears trembled in her large eyes, and laid her hand upon my head—“the curse has my heart removed from him. When it was pronounced, I thirsted to call it back again ; and I should have done it, Fransiska, then, if he had borne patiently the punishment, and the penance which his crime demanded. For that purpose I sought him in the night ; but he was gone. He fled from forgiveness, and would not deserve it ; but I have laid it down on his grave. There it lingers with the sun, and with the flowers, and gives him peace. Yet sometimes, when the recollection and the anguish seize me, so that my bosom will tear asunder, and it whirls in my brain, and I know not what I do, then at times I utter the curse—but after that I bless. Or what dost thou imagine that I did as I lay in the dust like a worm before our Lord, the picture of my son pressed to my heart ? Thinkest thou that I cursed him ? Peace ! peace be with his ashes !”

"And if he yet should live?"——said I, with a feeling I cannot describe,—“if he yet live; and through many sufferings have atoned for the sin of his youth; if he long, more than for all the honours of the world, to receive the pardon of his mother, to clasp her once more to his breast?”

Ma chère mère stepped back rigid and pale, her eyes flashed fearfully, and she made a repelling motion with the hand, and she said, “Is it so, Fransiska?——hast thou heard that he lives?”——and her voice trembled; “knowest thou that which he seeks and intends? Tell him to come no more to the country which would be ashamed of him! That he bear not the name which he has dishonoured; that he shall not dare to come into the presence of his mother, whom he has covered with disgrace. But tell him that I have revoked the curse. I will transmit him the half of my property to a foreign land. He may write to me, and require what he will; and I will lend him what he will; but——on my threshold he shall not set his foot!”

I bent my knee, and embraced hers. “Mother! mother!” I exclaimed, nearly beside myself, “is that Christian? is that right?”

“Stand up!” said she fiercely. “Not a word more. No one can judge me in this matter. What I have said, I have said; and I forbid thee to speak further upon it. Speak not of him, if thou wilt not—— Thinkest thou that here the question is of apples and pears?——I tell thee it is of reason and madness! Rouse not the evil spirit in me. Away with these remembrances, with these thoughts,—away! away!”

I stood up—my heart was tossed with contending emotions; but Ma chère mère’s wild look and her gestures showed me that now was not the time to give vent to them. Nevertheless, I would not give up all hope. I looked imploringly, with clasped hands, but she turned away from me. “Go,” said she sternly; “our discourse is at an end. I would be alone. Go, I will it!”

I went!—my soul full of bitterest anguish. Ma chère mère bolted the door behind me. As I entered the boudoir, I saw there a man standing with his forehead against the wall. It was Bruno. Terrified, I went to him, laid my hand gently on his arm, and said in a low voice, “For God’s sake, Bruno, what are you doing here, so near——” He turned slowly

his face towards me. It was deadly pale; cold perspiration stood on his brow; his look was confused; he gazed at me with a gloomy indifference. But suddenly he collected himself, and laying his hand on his forehead, rushed out of the room. I followed him, and thanked God as I saw Bear meet him, seize his arm, and compel him to be on his guard, that the servants might suspect nothing. With apparent calmness, they left the house together.

I went in the mean time to Jean Jacques. I could not let the husband and wife know all that had occurred. I told them simply that I had produced no result; that I had not dared to give Ma chère mère cause to imagine how near to her her son was, since the very thought of him seemed nearly sufficient to unsettle her reason. Jean Jacques stuck his hand in his coat-pockets, and went up and down the room, saying, "That is devilish, that is devilish. How can any one be so unreasonable? And then, Bruno,—I implored him to remain quiet; but as soon as he heard his mother's voice, which for a moment was audible here, he became like a maniac. He tore himself away from Bear, who would have held him, and dashed forth. It was well that he did not go in to Ma chère mère. There would have been a pretty 'larum!'"

Jane Marie also could not comprehend how it was that people could not be governed by their reason, but added that she had anticipated how the affair would end; that she had never looked for any good effect from it.

Neither of them spoke according to my feeling. I longed for Bear; I expected comfort and support from him. A length he came; he was heated, excited, and looked woe begone. I threw myself on his neck, and wept;—I could not do otherwise. He embraced me, and said merely, "We will not let our courage sink, nor give up all as lost: no tree is felled by a single stroke."

"Ah! what shall we do?" asked I, with a deep sigh.

"We will now go home," answered he, "and then we will talk further about it. The cabriolet is below. Adieu, Jean Jacques; adieu, sister-in-law. Come, Fanny!"

In the cabriolet I related to Bear all that had passed between Ma chère mère and myself. He said merely "Hum!—hum!—" Then we sate silent; but I knew that he thought with me, and more wisely than I. It did

me good to sit silently by his side, as we drove through the whispering wood. The weather was in harmony with my mood of mind. It was become dark ; and the boughs of the pines swayed in the wind, with a sort of sad disquiet.

"In the mean time," said Bear consolingly, when we had reached home—"in the mean time we have won one point This dangerous state of apathy is broken, and will probably, for this time, not return. That is a victory which may prepare the way for another. We won't despair. I will see Bruno to-morrow."

"In the mean time," to take up Bear's phrase, I am distressed in heart and soul, and know not what further to say.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM BRUNO TO ANTONIO.

September 3rd.

What is it to live ? To drag through unimportant days without interest and pleasure, and to sink together by degrees, like a building that is inwardly decayed. No, rather to desire to behold a future, at least a morrow; that is life. A morrow ! For me that will probably no more arise. The stream of life has turned itself away from me. Why should I linger in the desert, and thirst ? Mother, mother, from thee I am repulsed. It is thou who hast dried up my heart, and my world. But this night I will free myself; I will drink revenge. My mother ! Is it love, is it hate to her, by which I am impelled ? I know not. But this night I will stand before her, and burst the ice-rind of her heart ; or my brain shall burst, and she shall be covered with my blood. I will awaken in her bosom,—remorse. I will call into her eye a tear which shall never dry up again. She will not forgive . . . So be it, she shall weep. Why should I live ? For whom ? for what ? I have drunken the wild pleasure of life,—it disgusts me. To the better and the purer the way is barred ; barred by my own mother. Bitter, curse-inspiring feeling ! The mother's heart is closed against me ; closed therefore from me heaven also . . . the bosom of God. Yes, it must be so, for all the bitterness of the world has gathered itself into my heart. I will avenge myself on my mother ! And yet, in this dark moment, a mild, a refreshing sensation, slides into my soul. Serena ! Her beloved image

awakes it. She rejected me, but I cannot be angry with her. She renounced my love for the sake of her duty, she left me alone; yet my soul feels but tenderness towards her. That feeling does me good. I will never cause her woe. But as I saw her so firm, so strong, I saw her still farther withdrawn from me. As the star grows pale in a higher light, so paled she for me as she approached nearer to the angel. She cannot hold me back, the distance between us is too wide. And should, indeed, my death distress her, she will wrap herself in her white garb of innocence, in her saintly attire of virtue, and remain fixed and still; God is with her. Pure angel, peace be with thee! I may not press thee to my burning bosom; but from thy heaven, which is thy heritage, and from which I am exiled, thou wilt perhaps look down upon me, and refresh my heart, since no one possesses this power like thee. Farewell! Our paths now separate for ever: mine descends into the depths of darkness, thine ascends into the high light. Farewell!

Farewell, too, my dreams, ye dear dreams of a more beautiful life, of reconciliation and love. Fare ye well, ye tender and loving feelings in my soul, which I have loved and cherished as the better part of myself. And ye tones, which I have awoke on so many nights in order to answer the inquiries of my soul, to still its torments, sleep, sleep! I will never listen to you again. When I called you forth, I had still hope; now I have none.

No, Antonio, I have no hope! Despair lies in the depth of the question which I will yet once more put to my fate. Farewell, Antonio! Thanks for thy friendship; thanks for this, that with all my faults, thou hast loved me. Pardon that which I have done, be at peace with me, as I am with thee.

But thou, my mother! yet no peace with thee. Yet in this night I will press a kiss upon thy lips, either of life or of death. In vain dost thou withdraw thyself—thou shalt not escape. Higher powers are with me—to-night!

CHAPTER XIII.

FRANSISKA WERNER TO MARIA M——.

September 4-5th.

O MARIA! my dear Maria! what events, what scenes, what changes! How can one night have changed thus everything—but I must relate you all from the beginning. I have looked death in the face, death wild and horrible. Ah! it is still indeed near! But I must bring order into my soul and my conceptions.

For two days after my last interview with Ma chère mère, we heard nothing of her. On the third, Bear drove over to Carlsfors, to learn how matters stood. He found that Ma chère mère had been in a high state of excitement, and most restless mood of mind. During the night she had been heard going to and fro in her chamber almost incessantly; during the day she had wept bitterly. She was now somewhat more composed; she received Bear kindly, asked how his wife was; came into the drawing-room to tea, and appeared by degrees to resume her wonted manner.

The relation of her sufferings moved me. I almost longed to see her again, and to hear a friendly word from her; and I felt an actual delight as early next morning—it was the 3rd of September—I received a little kind of note from her, in which she said that in the forenoon she intended to drive to the town to purchase various small articles, and made me the proposal to bear her company. If I agreed she would call upon me, and in the evening deliver me safe at home again.

I wanted to buy myself three funnels, a sieve, and a little cullender, and accepted the offer with all my heart, after I had said a few words with Bear, and had promised to provide him a good dinner at home, though I should not have the pleasure of seeing him eat it. Bear did not look at all despairing about it, embraced me, and proceeded in the cabriolet to the town, where we hoped to meet.

It was not without some uneasiness and perplexity that I now thought of seeing Ma chère mère again. How could it stand between us after the last violent scene? What should

I say? How should I look? From this uncertainty I was relieved by Ma chère mère's arrival. She did not leave the carriage, but as I got in, she reached me her hand with a serious but open countenance, drew me to her, pushed back my bonnet, and kissed me on the forehead and mouth with great tenderness. This did me good, and from that moment I felt all restraint was gone. Yet I was in a sad mood. Ma chère mère was still; the day gloomy, the air heavy. No one can say that our drive was cheerful. At the spot where the road to Ramm branches off, Ma chère mère turned her head in the other direction. My heart was stirred within me by this sign of an irreconcilable feeling; but as she soon after put to me some unimportant question, I was so struck with her ghastly paleness that I could not be angry with her, but I was so grieved that I was on the very point of weeping. So reached we the town.

"In the widow of Provost Rhen," said Ma chère mère, as soon as we had got through the town gate, "thou wilt make acquaintance with a very imp of housekeeping." We descended at Madame Rhen's, where Ma chère mère has always when she is in the town a kind of inn. One cannot see the widow of Provost Rhen without immediately feeling that she is friendliness, hospitality, and talkativeness combined; and one cannot see her daughter Renetta without thinking that the apple falls not far from the tree. One cannot see her arrangements for Ma chère mère without perceiving that Ma chère mère is in her eyes a great puissance, which she equally fears and loves. For her sake I also was treated with zealous cordiality, and the good Renetta had nearly strangled me as she took off my cloak with so much vigour, the ribbons having by my awkwardness been drawn into a knot.

The Provostess Rhen had been a kind of housekeeper with Ma chère mère, who had betrothed and married her to the Provost, who suffered himself in this matter to be led by her as by his fate. Whether he had had to repent it, I know not. The Provostess was now a well-to-do widow, who placed her joy and honour in being able to entertain "the gracious Generalska" when she came there, by whom she was always bluntly and plainly called "Rhen."

The kindness of Rhen and Renetta; the neat, clean room, with two little lovely pictures, representing children playing

with tame animals, impressed me with a very agreeable feeling. The beautiful Småland cheese and a glass of Malaga, which were immediately set on a snow-white cloth, tasted most excellent. After our refreshment, Ma chère mère and I set out on our round of business. It had cleared up ; the air was charming ; and within me all had become more and more cheerful. There awoke in my soul I know not what glad anticipation ; and as the sun broke through the clouds, it seemed to me as if there could be no irremediable misfortune and no irreconcilable hearts—I felt as if all must turn out well. Well, my dear Maria, I am like a stringed instrument, perhaps a little too easily moved. But like me as I am. I like Byron, because he calls the heart “a pendulum betwixt a smile and tear.”

In the town was much throng and stir. It was market-day ; and the great market-place was full of people, wagons, and carts. It delighted me thoroughly to behold the joyous swarm ; it delighted me to meet Bear in the town ; I promised myself a moment’s time to call on Serena. All presented itself to me as lively and pleasant. The smell of the fresh hay diffused itself fragrantly from the peasants’ wagons. Here the peasant lifted his smoked ham to the nose of a stooping connoisseur ; there a good woman vaunted her fresh butter ; here the carrot lay separated from the red beet, which had been its companion in the green hamper ; there people sold pears for a penny a-piece. There was a hum of blithe voices, of gossip and laughter ; and amongst men, horses, and wagons, hurried about a brisk flock of sparrows, twittering here and there throughout the market, gathered the scattered manna, flew up with a whisk when a heavy-footed fellow scattered this light troop, and then as unweariedly dropped themselves down again. Stout old women, well armed with wit and tongue, sate in rows before the houses and in the market-place, with their meal-tubs, their great loaves, their baskets of pears and pastry, and rated keenly the street lads, who as they went by sought to indemnify themselves for their want of money with pert sayings. A spirit of joke came over me. Before me stood a ragged little boy with a good countenance, who regarded the riches of the market with a philosophical whistling. Behind him, upon a step, stood his empty basket, over which a net was thrown. I filled this dexterously with

sugar-pears, and the old woman of whom I bought them lifted the net cautiously up herself, and nodded to me that she understood the whim. The youngster will long wonder to himself how these pears came there. Farther on stood a horse tied up to a window-shutter, and stretched his lean head out towards some chaff, but could not reach it. I took a famous lock of hay out of the cart and gave it to the horse, while I looked round half in fear at the proprietor. Ma chère mère laughed, and gave him another lock. The horse eat.

"Good mother, why do you tempt me with your fine plums? I must have a half measure. Here, pour them into my handkerchief. But the money? Oh, I have no small change."

The good mother must go into a shop to get change; but who shall sell the pears and plums meanwhile? I will. The old woman goes; I set myself on her stool, sell fruit, and take the money. I have no customer so difficult as Ma chère mère, who will have an immensity for her money, and mercilessly beats me down and runs down the quality of my goods. I answer as well and as roughly as I can. Finally, the good woman comes back with the change; and is so satisfied with my management of her property, that I must take a quarter of a measure of plums for my services.

You will wonder at Ma chère mère's patience with all this. But this sort of thing delights her, and one of her qualities which makes her so agreeable to me is the hearty and pleasant way in which she enters into any innocent joke.

But the time fled. The clock of the church struck twelve. We must hasten if we mean to get our business done before dinner. I glanced towards every gateway and street-corner to discover Bear, but in vain. We entered some shops, looked at various things, but bought nothing. Ma chère mère scolded the masters of the shops for their bad articles; they tried to raise their voices in their defence, but she raised her voice above theirs, and put them down. The clock struck one. Ma chère mère said, "We must not let Rhen's soup get cold." We set out back again, I quite out of humour not to have found Bear; but in passing through the next street, what beheld I at the corner?—a sight to me a thousand times more delightful than an enchanted castle and bountiful fairies—a broad, grey back, beyond all power of

mistake that of Bear. I sprang softly on him, held him fast, and said, " You shall not get away, you Bear! I take you captive. You come with me."

" And dine with us at Rhen's, and do not go away again till afternoon," added Ma chère mère.

Bear was not difficult to be persuaded, took the arm of his little wife, and walked with her to Madame Rhen's, giving her a moral sermon on her presumption in acting the policeman. But though he joked, I could see that he was not glad.

Rhen and Renetta ran busily about to bring up the dinner as we entered. As they spied Bear, they sprung in raptures upon him, and their joy mounted to the very roof at having the company of the good and cordial-hearted man. We sate down to table. The dinner was excellent; my appetite was equally so; the hostesses were pressing and communicative; I had passed a merry morning, and would fain still be cheerful, but there sate Bear with so solemn a face that it troubled me. I saw that he had Bruno in his head and heart. He now also entered mine, and all my lightness of spirit vanished; yes, I reproved myself that I could have been so gay. Bear looked at Ma chère mère frequently with a grave and piercing notice; and I observed that she sought to avoid his gaze. This power of his over her gave me pleasure. But at once she stared at him with her great dark eyes so keenly that he was obliged to sink his little grey ones, and I could not help internally smiling at this skirmish of glances.

Immediately after coffee, Bear left us, in order yet to visit some patients, and would thence drive home. I accompanied him into the hall, since one could not enjoy any quiet in the presence of Rhen and Renetta. " Bear, thou art restless and sad," said I anxiously, and took his hand. " I have seen Bruno to-day," he replied, " and am very much afraid that the whole business will have an unfortunate termination." " Good God!" I exclaimed. " Yes, may He help us," said Bear; " for here none else can. Bruno seems to contemplate a desperate experiment. What he has got in his head, I could not drag from him. And I would not further restrain him from battling out his own concern. That which cannot be bent, must sometimes be broken. But go in now, Fanny

go in. More in the evening. In the evening I shall see thee again."

Bear's words had troubled my whole soul, and the feelings of my mind were probably visible in my countenance, for Ma chère mère asked me eagerly "if I were unwell?" and my hostesses exclaimed, that I was so pale, so very pale. I complained of dizziness, and, in fact, everything went round with me.

Provostess Rhen knocked at the window, then opened it, and cried, "Madame! Madame!" Two gentlemen looked back, and a youth came to the window. "Madame!" said she still louder,—"Madame Al—ah! yes, it was Madame Follin—hear you, good Madame; here is a two-dollar banco, take it, be so good, and run to Bergström's, and ask him for a little of his best eau de Cologne, for Madame Rhen. There will be one dollar four-and-twenty out of it. Thank you kindly, good Madame."

My hostess overwhelmed me now with kindness, liqueur, and perfumed water; begged me to sit by the window, and to divert my mind by looking into the street, and at the people (there was not a single creature in the street excepting a dog). I thanked her for her goodness, but said that the free air would soonest relieve me. Ma chère mère arose directly, and we went out.

We spent more than two hours with going about, and in the shops. Ma chère mère made me a present, far too splendid for me, but the heartfelt expression in her countenance and manner made it dear to me. I purchased some trifles for Bear, which he needed, but which he always forgot to procure for himself. We had promised to take tea with the Provostess; Ma chère mère would not allow me to give it up; and I saw with regret that we should not have time to see Serena. On our return to Madame Rhen's, we crossed the great market-place, which had been so lively in the forenoon. It was now deserted, and merely strewn with the litter of past business, and with the children of the air. Ma chère mère was quite indignant that the besoms were not at work, and declared that she would speak to the Mayor about it."

A single hay-wagon stood yet in the corner of the market-place, about which a multitude of people was assembled

Ma chère mère stood still, and asked some one who came from the wagon, "What there was there?" "A great wolf, which had been shot," was the answer. "We must see that," said Ma chère mère, advanced, and made a way through the people, who, as soon as they recognised her, made room for her. The countrymen lifted their hats. I followed her, like a little boat in the wake of a frigate. When we reached the wagon, we saw there an unusually large and fine wolf. There was a strong pressure around us, but Ma chère mère protected me by putting her powerful arm about me, and turning herself at the same time to the people, said, "Don't crowd so!" which was immediately repeated by numerous voices, and we obtained ample room. The peasant to whom the wagon belonged, related, in reply to Ma chère mère, how he had gone out in the early morning with his gun, and saw two young wolves on the border of the wood, which had laid themselves on some litter under a fir-tree. He drew near, and took aim at them. At the same moment their mother sprang out of the wood with a fierce howl, and placed herself before them. He fired, she fell, and the young ones ran off into the wood. The man hastened to the wolf; she struggled with death; and a second shot put an end to her, and he joyfully dragged his booty home. I saw that the tongue of the creature hung far out on one side, and as I alluded to that, the countryman showed me that the tongue was nearly bitten off. She had probably done it in the agony of death, he added. For the first time I felt pity for a wolf; and I could not refrain from stroking the head of the fine animal, and saying softly—"Good mother!"—"Let us go, Fransiska," said Ma chère mère abruptly, and we made our way back as we had made it thither. Ma chère mère looked gloomy, and as we went over the market-place I could not omit saying, for my heart was moved—"What a fine feeling must live in animals, which man considers to stand so far beneath him! A wolf dies for her young!"

"The young of the wolf," said Ma chère mère in a bitter tone, "had occasioned their mother no grief: she died in her pride in them. Better to die with a bitten tongue, than to live with a torn heart." We were both silent. Presently we came to a little green plain, on which fine poplars reared their quivering pyramids. The sun in its setting burnished

them with deep gold, and a number of little birds filled them with the music of their songs. Seats were here placed that the passers-by might enjoy the shade. On one of those benches sat two persons, who attracted our attention: one of them was an aged woman, evidently poor, but of a good-natured countenance, and dressed with extraordinary neatness. Near her sate a man, equally neatly clad, with a long pale face, hanging lips, and the aspect of one of weak intellect. Ma chère mère, who possesses a tolerable portion of curiosity, approached them. As we drew near we saw that the man was blind. "Is that your brother, good woman?" asked Ma chère mère. "My son," answered the woman with a sigh. "Son! how old is he?" "Twenty-five years." He looked fifty. "He is blind, and, as I fancy, also deaf," continued Ma chère mère. "Blind, and deaf, and dumb," answered the mother. "How long has he been in this condition?" "Since his birth." "Has he any sort of ideas?" "That is difficult to perceive; one must guide, feed, tend, and watch him like a child; but sometimes he weeps, and sometimes he laughs." "What makes him laugh?" "When he comes out into the air he is cheerful and laughs, and when I caress him long. Thank God he knows me!" Hereupon she began kindly to stroke the cheeks of her son, and to pat him on the shoulder. He smiled on that with increasing liveliness and gladness, and his countenance assumed almost an expression of reason. "Is he sometimes ill-humoured?" "Yes, often; and then he is quite raging. But still he has a good heart. He sleeps very little by night, and then he is accustomed to grope his way round to the beds of his sister's children, and to feel whether they are covered. If they have thrown off their bed-clothes, he spreads them carefully over them. He is especially careful of the sister's little daughter, and when he hears her cry, he is beside himself."

"You must therefore be obliged to keep him in your eye more than all your other children?"

"Yes, of necessity. They have understanding, but he has only me. I can very rarely leave him."

At this moment the deaf and dumb made some horrible sounds; they were a kind of howl, but the howl of a wild beast is nothing to such as these. Tears started from the blind eyes, and copiously wet his face, which, besides this,

showed no expression of pain. The poor wretch wiped them away with his hands.

"And this has continued for twenty-five years, and may continue yet longer?" asked Ma chère mère, with a tone of voice which made evident how deeply it had seized on her mind. "Are you not tired, good woman?"

"No; with the help of God shall I never be tired with my child, but patiently await the time when it shall please the Lord to relieve us. May I only not die before him."

"What is your name, good woman?"

"Margaret Beck, widow of Beck the baker."

"Good morning, Madame Beck. God bless you! We shall meet again."

Ma chère mère went on, while she said half aloud to herself, "Twenty-five years!"

I said nothing, but hoped within myself that this circumstance might not be without its effect upon her own heart. We walked on for some time silently and slowly, when Ma chère mère looked hastily up, appeared to arouse herself out of her reverie, and half reproachfully, half briskly said, "Thou movest like a tortoise, Fransiska, and thus we go dreaming away our time. We must now hasten to Rhen's, and drink our tea quickly, that we may not have to reach home in the dark."

But to get away quickly from Madame Rhen and her tea was impossible. There was no end of handing and pressing on you of biscuits, cracknels, tea-cakes, and gingerbread; and the good lady now began even to talk of supper, and said she had purposely ordered a good fat turkey, and hoped that Madame Mansfelt would consent to stay, and not give her the disappointment of seeing her little preparation was fruitless. I expected to see it at once declined by Ma chère mère, but, to my great astonishment, she answered neither yes nor no; and as Madame Rhen began to speak in her zeal of a clear evening and moonlight, and I verily believe of sunshine and the Northern lights, Ma chère mère said at length with great coolness, "Well, well, we shall see." Madame Rhen took this as an acquiescence, gave Renetta a hint, and followed her herself into the kitchen. I seized this opportunity to tell Ma chère mère of my fear of our driving home in the dark; but when I turned towards her, I saw her sitting with her

elbows on the table, and her face covered with her hands, in one of those fits of melancholy of which I had so often heard, but till now had never been an eye-witness of. I neither would nor dared to disturb her, and we both sate profoundly silent till Madame Rhen entered with lights, accompanied by Renetta, who brought in the cakes and preserved cherries. Ma chère mère on this changed her position, but continued gloomy and silent. I myself was by no means talkative, but the lively hostess did not concern herself on that account. She and her daughter talked away incessantly, told stories, interrupted each other, and mutually drowned each other's voices in their eagerness. All the gossip, all the little intrigues of the city were touched on, and drawn out into long histories. I could not help being amused by some of these, and I was more than once obliged to laugh, as well at the zeal of the relaters, as at the relations themselves, which, on this, went on more vigorously than ever. I know not whether Ma chère mère heard anything of all this or not; her thoughts seemed to me to be internally directed, and I wondered to see her address herself so effectually to the turkey, and finally, with some hearty phrases, commend Rhen's supper.

I was thoroughly wearied of all the eating and the talk. I longed to be at home, and with Bear; and said, "God be thanked!" as we were once more seated in the carriage. In the mean time it was become very dark; and instead of the lights and shines which Madame Rhen had promised us, the heaven had put on a grey mantle of cloud, which did not permit even the faintest glimpse of a star to pass through. But on the western horizon it lightened strong and frequently, although without thunder. It was that which is called sheet lightning. Ma chère mère took the reins from the boy, who then took his seat behind, where we soon heard him snore.

The evening was warm and still: and this drive, by the radiance of the lightning, would not have been disagreeable to me, but I was in an anxious mood, and besides this, somewhat fearful; for the darkness was sometimes so deep that we could not distinguish the way, and Ma chère mère had not her accustomed vigilance. She appeared to be in an excited state of mind, and often lifted her handkerchief to her face. This her uneasiness did me good, but at the same time filled me with disquiet as it regarded our progress. We went, how-

ever, securely on, if not at the quickest pace ; and notwithstanding my fear, notwithstanding all uneasy and anxious thoughts, by the slow driving and the easy rocking of the carriage, I became at last very sleepy. I nodded, and dreamed I know not how long, but was suddenly awaked by a violent shock from the carriage striking against some stump or stone. I looked round ;—we were in a dark and thick wood. My spirits sunk. It seemed to me that we had driven already long enough to have reached home.

"It is to be hoped that we are really on the right way," said I, doubtingly. "It appears to me that we must have driven quite long enough. I hope we have not gone wrong."

At these words Ma chère mère seemed to wake out of a dream ; and said sharply, and somewhat offended, "Make yourself easy, dear child, when I drive. Ought not I and my horses to know the way that we have traversed so often ? We have gone it together these fifteen years, and have never missed our way yet."

She let the horses feel the whip, and they went quicker. I was still anxious, and fancied by the light of the somewhat clearer sky that all around us looked strange and wild. "I cannot conceive where we can be," said I at length, unable any longer to conceal my uneasiness. "I cannot recognise anything around us. A wood so lofty and thick as this there certainly is not on the way to Carlsfors."

"Don't be a croaker, Fransiska," said Ma chère mère, quite out of temper, "and don't see ghosts where there are none. By night the wood appears twice as high and as thick as by day. I cannot exactly see where we are, but I observe that my animals scent home and their stable. They never run thus but when we are near Carlsfors ; and hark ! how they snort. See, are we not in the great avenue ? Yes, certainly, we are just there. I fancy I see the house itself glimmer out yonder."

We were now certainly in an avenue. Ma chère mère put on the horses, and they flew every moment more rapidly forward. Now came one great and tremendous blaze of lightning, which lasted some seconds ; and by its light reared itself, like a gigantic spectre, out of the blackness of the night —a huge and gloomy house, not Carlsfors, but——Ramm ! Ramm, with its dark façade, and its great wings, lay before

us in the glare of the lightning. It stretched, as it seemed, its threatening arms towards us ; and every instant we were drawn nearer and nearer towards it.

I looked with terror at Ma chère mère. She sat as if changed to stone. Her gaze was fixed and staring ; the reins dropped from her hands. All was night again, but only for a few seconds. Again came a flash, so great and vivid that trees, bushes, and buildings, appeared all in flame. In this moment stood a tall, dark figure suddenly before us. The horses, terrified, and no longer restrained by a guiding hand, flew right and left, and over lawn and shrubbery, dashed downwards towards the lake, which shone out by the lightning gleam clear amongst the trees.

With convulsive vehemence Ma chère mère endeavoured to recover the reins, which had fallen. I screamed "Help ! help !" with all the force of my desperation. Then sprung some one before the horses and seized the reins. I saw the horses rear ; saw some one struggling with them ;—by the glare of the now incessant lightning I recognised Bruno. I saw him thrown down by the horses ; it seemed to me that they went over his body ; more I saw not, for I lost my consciousness.

When I came to myself again, I found myself in Ma chère mère's arms. I saw her pale countenance over me ; its expression of anguish and tenderness I never, never shall forget. "God be praised ! she recovers !" said Ma chère mère, and impressed a motherly kiss on my forehead. A lofty rotunda arched itself above us, lighted by a lamp from above. A tall and very dark woman, whom I had never before seen, stood near me, and handed me a strong cordial. My senses were confused, and I could not recal into my memory what had just now occurred ; but in this darkness of thought and of vision I sought for Bruno. In the gloomiest corner of the chamber stood—was it a bloody spectre which my terrified imagination had evoked, or was it an actual human shape ? My eyes fixed themselves inquiringly upon it ; it came forward,—it was Bruno ! But, gracious heavens ! what a spectacle ! Blood streamed from his brow and down upon his naked breast, his clothes were torn to rags, his cheeks were deadly pale ; wild disquiet burned in his eyes ; in the strong contracted eyebrows lightnings seemed to conceal themselves,

and desperate determination pressed the lips together. He approached us. At a hint from him, that strange woman withdrew, and we three were left alone. I tore myself loose from Ma chère mère's arms, and sate upon the sofa. My whole consciousness was come back; my whole soul was vehemently on the stretch, and with the most indescribable anxiety I observed both mother and son, who now stood face to face. Their looks seemed to pierce through each other. Ma chère mère seemed to be smitten with the wildest amazement; and stepped a little backwards. Bruno stepped a step forward, and said slowly, and as with a benumbed tongue, "You are rescued. God be praised! And for me now only remains to die or to win forgiveness!—My mother! my mother!" exclaimed he at once, as if an angel had loosened tongue and feeling, while with a heart-rending expression he sank down and embraced her knees. "My mother, wilt thou not pardon? Wilt thou not bless thy son? Take away! take away the curse from my brow. Mother! I have suffered so much. I have wandered about without peace: I am destitute of peace yet: peace can never be mine while I am thrust from thy bosom.—I have suffered; I have suffered much; I have repented;—I can, and will atone. But then you must pardon, you must bless me, mother. Mother take away the curse! Thou knowest not how it burns! Lay a blessing on my head. Mother, will you not stanch the blood which flows on your account? See mother!" and Bruno raised his clotted locks, through which deep and streaming wounds were visible. "See, mother, if thou wilt not lay thy hand here in blessing, I swear, by—that this blood-stream shall never cease till my life has welled out with it, and has sunk me to the grave on which alone thou wilt lay thy forgiveness. There, there first shall I find peace. Oh, mother! was an error in young and wild years then so unpardonable? Cannot a later life of virtue and of love make atonement? Mother! cast me not off. Let the voice of thy son penetrate to thy heart. Bestow on me forgiveness, full forgiveness!"

Overcome by my feelings, I threw myself on my knees by Bruno, and cried, "Pardon! pardon!"

What during this time passed in Ma chère mère's heart I know not. It seemed to be a contest of life and death. She moved not;—with a fixed and immovable gaze she looked

down at the kneeling one, and convulsive twitches passed over her pale lips. But as his voice ceased, she lifted her hand and pressed it strongly against her heart. "My son! Oh! — Oh!" said she with a hollow voice. She sighed deeply; her countenance became yellow, her eyes closed, she reeled, and would have fallen to the ground, if Bruno had not sprung up and caught her in his arms.

He stood a moment still, his mother pressed to his bosom, and gazed on her countenance, over which Death had shed his awful peace. "Is it thus," said he, in a quiet distraction, is it thus then that we are reconciled, mother? Thus thou restest on the bosom of thy son, and he on thine? Thou art pale, my mother, but peaceful, and lookest kind—kind as God's propitiation. It was not thus that I saw thee the last time; but the hour of wrath is over;—is it not so, my mother? The grave has opened itself, and we go down there reconciled, and heart to heart; one in my last hour, as we were one at my first sigh!" And he kissed her pale lips and cheeks with passionate tenderness.

"Bruno! Bruno!" I exclaimed imploringly, and weeping seized his arm. "Bruno, you kill your mother and yourself, when you go on in this manner. Come, we will lay her on a bed. We must endeavour to recal her to consciousness; we must bind your wounds."

Bruno made no answer, but took his mother in his arms and carried her into another room, where he laid her softly down upon a bed. "Hagar!" he called; and that tall dark woman immediately stepped in. She threw herself at his feet; weeping kissed his hand; and addressed him passionately and imploringly in a language which I did not understand. He thrust her sternly from him; and I understood that he commanded her to exert herself for Ma chère mère. She obeyed with sobs and tears. I saw that Bruno staggered, and supported himself against the wall. I went to him.

"Bruno," said I, "for your mother's sake, think of yourself. You must lie down; you must allow your wounds to be bound up."

He seized a light sofa and drew it forward, so that it stood just opposite to the bed on which his mother lay, and threw himself upon it. His head lay opposite to hers, and he fixed

his eyes upon her. Hagar and I came between them. In broken Swedish, and great agitation of mind, Hagar said to me, "Bind, bind up his wounds, or he dies!"

I folded a cloth, dipped it in cold water, and said to Bruno, "For your mother's sake, let me bind your wounds as well as I can, or you will bleed to death." I was proceeding, but he held my hand back, and said with a tone whose severity strongly reminded me of his mother—"It cannot be done. She has not yet forgiven me—not yet blessed me. My blood shall not till then be stanch'd; I have sworn it."

To persuade Bruno was not to be expected; I therefore directed all my attention to Ma chère mère. But for a long time all my endeavours to restore her to consciousness were in vain. It was a moment of unspeakable agony. I feared that actually mother and son would follow one another to the grave.

"If we could but get her bled," said I.

"That can be done," replied Hagar, and ran out.

Nearly in the same instant Ma chère mère opened her eyes, and fixed them sharply on me. "Where is he?" demanded she eagerly: "I have not dreamed!"

"He is here," I answered; "he is near; he is bleeding to death while he awaits the blessing of his mother."

"Where is he?" demanded she again.

I stood near her pillow—I stood between mother and son; and instead of answering her question, I drew myself back, and their eyes met each other. A beam of heavenly light, of ineffable love, kindled in them; and it melted their souls into one. She raised herself with energy, and stretched out her hand with the warmest expression of maternal feeling while she said—"My son, come hither: I will bless thee!"

He stood up. The tall, gigantic man staggered like a child, and sank on his knees by the bed of his mother. She laid her hands on his bloody head, and said with a strong voice and a deep solemnity, "I take away the curse which I once laid on the head of my son. I bestow on him my full forgiveness. May the man atone for the error of the youth! Let the past be as if it never had been. I acknowledge that I owe my life to my son; and I pray God Almighty to bless thee, my son, Bruno Mansfelt, as I bless thee now.

Amen!" With that she opened her arms; he clasped his round her; bosom was pressed to bosom, lip to lip; they held one another in a long and close embrace. Every breath seemed to be full of reconciliation, of love, and happiness. Fifteen years of bitter pangs were in this moment compensated and forgotten. I stood near them, and wept for joy and thankfulness.

Hagar's return interrupted this moment of pure transport. Bruno again kissed with deep love the hand of his mother, then arose and cried out joyfully, "Now bind my wounds! Stop the blood! I have my mother's blessing!"

He seated himself, and let us do just what we pleased, and was good and quiet as a friendly child. Hagar attended on him with great skill, and succeeded in stopping, in some measure, the flow of blood. In the mean time I procured writing materials, and hastened to send a note to Bear to inform him of that which had taken place. The whole house was in motion, and it was easy to find a messenger, who betook himself immediately across the lake to Rosenvik. I then returned again to the reconciled ones. Bruno's wounds were bound up. He was very pale but still, and his countenance had an expression of peace and happiness which I saw for the first time in it. Ma chère mère, on the contrary, appeared powerfully excited, although she endeavoured to be quiet. Her whole frame trembled as with excessive cold, but her eyes were mild and tender; she scarcely ever removed them from her son.

"Hear now what I have to beg of you," said I to them both. "If you would live for each other, you must consent to separate for a short time, and must each endeavour to get some rest. Bruno, cannot you allow yourself to be conducted to the next chamber? Will not Ma chère mère oblige her Fransiska?"

But Ma chère mère answered, "Who knows how long mother and son have yet to live? It may soon be all over; separate us not."

"Separate us not," replied Bruno, with a faint voice.

"But at least you must take something composing. Why would you not live for one another?"

Hagar put a phial containing an opiate into my hand. Ma

chère mère, however, refused to take any ; Bruno put it to his mouth and took a considerable draught. He must have been accustomed to this means of stupefaction.

"I will willingly remain alone with my son," said Ma chère mère. "When he sleeps, I will watch over him. I have done it formerly, and in this very room. Thou, Fransiska, needest rest. Go, my child, and endeavour to sleep. But hear ;—first let it be seen that my bays are well cared for. A greater service than they have rendered me to-night have they never rendered me these fifteen years. Inquire after the lacquey. Do that, Fransiska. Good night, my child."

I went out, and saw that Ma chère mère's commands were executed. The bays were eating their oats in their stalls ; the little lacquey sate in the kitchen, with a great piece of bread-and-butter in hand and mouth. From him I heard a long and not very lucid relation, of how the carriage had been on the very point of upsetting into the lake,—how the strange gentleman had been so much hurt by the horses, but yet had mastered them,—how Ma chère mère had carried me into the house, while the gentleman held the horses, and how the boy did not know whether he were living or dead, etc. After I had heard all this, I took a cup of coffee, and ordered that a cup should also be taken to Ma chère mère, who loves coffee.

Refreshed by this warm and inspiriting beverage, I went—not to bed. No, I was far too much excited, too restless ; and felt an indescribable desire to breathe the free air, and to see God's heaven. I saw it. I thought I had never beheld it more beautiful ; oh ! it expanded itself now over reconciled and happy hearts. It was cloudy, but the clouds were growing momentarily thinner, and through them glanced the friendly blue, and the air was indescribably pure and mild. I seated myself on the great flight of stone steps, and saw the dawning morning, and thought on the reconciled ones. Sanguine flames flew up from the horizon, and flushed the grey clouds. These mirrored themselves ruddily in the lake, and the windows of the dark house became illuminated one after another as with an incarnadine light by the glow of the morning red. A soft wind went southing through the lofty oaks, and bending their lofty heads. All besides was still. Thus sate I long, and felt deep enjoyment ; thought much, and lived over much in these moments. Never had existence appeared to me so

beautiful and full of interest; never had I more intensely loved, more confidently believed in the operation of a Divine power in life; never had I enjoyed more exalted being than in this hour. I shall never forget it! I thought of Bear with tenderness and pride. I felt myself happy to live for him. I thought on the future; and marvellous feelings, presentiments full of joy and sorrow, arose in my soul:—later may I perhaps speak further of them.

I perceived the approach of some one behind me. I turned, and on the steps beheld Hagar, who, with an expression of great anxiety, her hands crossed on her bosom, drew near me, and in her broken Swedish asked eagerly—“What think you? Will he live? Say, oh say, that he will live!”

“I believe—I hope it,” I answered. “My husband is a physician; he will soon be here, and will devote all his care to him.”

Hagar left me, wound her naked arms round one of the granite columns of the portico, and pressed her brow against it. When she had stood thus for a moment, she raised her head, and looked towards the east, where the morning red now burned in all its glory. I had not before regarded Hagar attentively! I did it now, and was astonished at her beauty. She was no longer young, and the features were too marked, but they were of the purest form; though the voluptuous and full lips reminded one too much of the characteristic, and to my taste unpleasant, peculiarity of the Hebrew form of countenance. The dark hue of the face was now illumined by the roseate fire of the morning sun; the black and uncovered hair fell neglected on the shoulders. I forgot for a moment everything else in the observation of this figure, which seemed grown into union with the granite pillar. The expression of the countenance was full of passion and grief.

After some moments, Hagar left her position and approached me. “Believe you,” asked she, stretching out her arm towards the east—“believe you that He who causes that light to ascend, also hears the prayers of men?”

“Yes, I believe it,” I replied, with quiet confidence.

“And answers them?”

“When they proceed from a pure heart, and He in his wisdom finds it good.”

Hagar was silent for a moment, bowed her head, and said,

"If you have a clean heart, pray for him who bleeds within. Pray that he may live."

"You take a warm interest in him," said I, not without curiosity. "You are, perhaps, nearly connected with him; or—"

She cast a penetrating look at me, and then said, with an expression full of pride and pain, "Hagar was a handmaid. At one time she was loved by her master, and for his sake she forsook all, and went forth with him into strange, cold lands; then cast he her off for another woman; but her heart was true to him, and in the wilderness into which she was cast forth, she prayed for him to the Lord of heaven."

"Hagar," said I, taking up her words, "was not alone in the wilderness. When she turned in her affliction to God, he commanded a well of fresh water to spring up for her."

Hagar shook her head in a mournful scepticism, laid a finger on her mouth, while with the other hand she pointed to the house, and left me in haste.

I was in the act to follow her, for I found the air now to become colder, but I continued standing; for—for—what thinkest thou I perceived now in the avenue, whipping and trotting this way on a panting steed, fluttering through the wood like a great, great bat? No other than my own good, longed-for Bear! I scarcely dared to believe my own eyes, since it was impossible that the messenger could already have arrived; and besides, why came he so miserably mounted, and not perfectly at his ease in a boat over the lake? I was ready to dispute the evidence of my own eyes, but he came continually nearer; it was impossible longer to doubt. He dismounted, and I flew towards him as he towards me.

"Art thou really then my own Bear, and no bat?" I exclaimed, as I embraced him with transport.

"Art thou really my own wife, and no half-crazed moonshine princess, who sits there——"

"Ah! Bear, we have no time to joke. Say, how camest thou here? Dost thou know what has happened? Hast thou received my note? But why camest thou on horseback? How warm thou art! Ah! come in, Bear, and I will tell thee all, and hear all thou hast to say."

"My sweet child! thou hast sometimes such a horrible *flux de bouche*; now God be praised that thou art alive, and

hast the gift of speech ;” and with tears in his honest eyes, the good man held me long pressed to his heart.

As we went in I related shortly how things here stood, and learned from Bear how he had come hither. He was become uneasy at my long stay, and fearing that some accident had occurred, he prepared to set out for the city ; and having had the luck to break the cabriolet, he mounted the horse, and rode off like another Don Quixote in quest of his Dulcinea. On the way he met a servant from Ramm, who had also business in the city, and learned from him that Ma chère mère had got hither, and also a certain other lady, and that both were alive. “ More,” said Bear, “ I did not hear. I gave the grey the whip, and here I am.” We embraced again in our joy at this double reunion, and Bear went in to the patients.

I followed him not, but went and made myself at home in the kitchen, and saw a hearty breakfast prepared for him. The good people showed me thorough good-will in fulfilling my commands, and in half an hour I had a table set out in the dining-room, with hot coffee, bread-and-butter, and a dish of delicious beefsteaks. My very mouth watered on Bear’s behalf. Whilst I was still busily arranging the table, the good man entered, with a pale, serious, but contented countenance.

“ Now, how do you find matters ?” asked I, in breathless eagerness. “ But, no ; say nothing ; sit down and eat ; only one word—look affairs well or ill ?”

“ With Bruno, well, I hope. The loss of blood is great ; the wounds are deep, but so far as I can at present see, not dangerous. With Ma chère mère it is not well ; at least, not yet ; but it may be. I fancy thou canst go in, Fanny ; and in the mean time I will send a messenger to the city for sundry requisites.”

“ And the coffee—and the beefsteak ?” I exclaimed in consternation.

“ I cannot think about them at present,” replied Bear, and hastened out of the room, with a look at the beefsteak, as if the devil himself had taken flesh and blood in order to tempt him. I covered, with a sigh, the warm beefsteak with a plate, and went in to Ma chère mère. Scarcely had I passed the door, when I saw with amazement how Bear had lorded it there

What I had attempted in vain to effect by solicitations, he had ordered and settled at once. Bruno had been conveyed into the room adjoining that in which Ma chère mère lay ; Hagar was beside him, and the door stood open between the rooms. Ma chère mère was alone.

As I entered, Ma chère mère extended her hand, drew me towards her, and embraced me with a tenderness which deeply moved me. "Fransiska," said she, "the Lord has changed my heart. Before, all was so dark, so strange ; now all feels so clear and comfortable. Wonderful are the ways of the Lord ! Who can comprehend them ? Who can climb into the council-chamber of God ? Thus have I a son again, Fransiska ! I am not childless. Bruno will make amends for that which he has done amiss. He will yet do honour to his mother and his native land. The Bible is right ;—a man may fall seven times, and yet rise again. Fransiska ! and he was so long near me, and I did not know it ! My senses were blinded, and my heart shut up, but the Lord has opened its sluices. Thy husband, Fransiska, has exercised his tyranny here, and I have allowed him to do it, because he asserted that otherwise he could not answer for the life of Bruno ; but I will see my son again to-day ; and no one need think of preventing me. I *will* see him ! Who knows how long I may see him in this world ?"

"Long, very long, I hope, if Ma chère mère will do everything that Bear prescribes."

"See there now ! how the good wife boasts of her husband, and counts him for omnipotent ! But the Lord does as he wills, Fransiska."

"Do you feel ill, mother ?" I asked tenderly, and with anxiety.

"No—not ill, but I feel so strangely. I have no strength in my legs. I cannot stand. There is a conflict, a disturbance within me, which seems to me as if it preceded death. The Lord's will be done ! I have been permitted to bless my son, and he will close my eyes. I can die in peace."

"Mother, you will not die ; no, no !" exclaimed I eagerly, "follow only in all things Bear's prescriptions."

Ma chère mère smiling made a sort of disdainful motion with her hand, and lay still, her eyes turned towards the door

of Bruno's room. Rejoiced as I was over her disposition of mind, I was equally uneasy as to her state of health. She appeared to me feverish, and there was something fixed and dry in her look. The powerful burst of tears which is wont to accompany great agitation of feeling in her, had been in this case absent. The storm had wholly diverted itself inwards. "Go and see whether he sleeps," said she, pointing towards Bruno's room.

I went; he lay actually in a quiet slumber. He was very pale, but he seemed to me more handsome than ever. The brows so often drawn together were now parted, and swept in mild lines over the great arch of the eyes. A tear glittered on his colourless cheek. Opposite to him, her arm supported against the bedpost and her head on her hand, stood Hagar, her gaze fixed immovably on his face. Her rich black locks fell down over her arm, and left only to view the profile of her countenance. Again was I compelled to admire her regular and oriental beauty. She saw me not, and I softly returned to Ma chère mère, and said—"He sleeps." "Heaven bless his sleep!" she replied.

Soon afterwards I heard somewhat move in the dining-room, and immediately thinking of Bear, I begged Ma chère mère to excuse me a minute. I really found my Bear in the dining-room. He had made an attack on the beefsteak, but yet was not so much occupied with it as not to become aware of my entrance, and to extend to me heartily his hand. I placed myself near him; saw him despatch his breakfast, and rejoiced myself in his excellent appetite. When the first vigour of this was abated, I began more fully to relate the occurrences of the night. To say the truth, it seemed to me as if during this night, on many occasions, I had shown myself half a heroine, and I wished Bear properly to feel this, and I was at some trouble to extract a little commendation from him. But, to my mortification, he was invincibly dumb, and only at times made abominable grimaces, which I fancy were meant for bulwarks against the outbreak of tears; but when I came to the reconciliation, then they burst forth. Two great tears fell, and diluted his beefsteak gravy. In the mean time I paused awhile, to give the good man opportunity to fall into ecstasies over his wife. But I heard not a word.

When, however, I arrived at my administering of the opiate, he broke out suddenly—"Nay, this was the most crazy of all! Opium to a man that is dying of exhaustion!"

I was like one fallen from the clouds. I sat with open mouth, but could not speak.

"No, that was not the craziest," muttered Bear; "the most crack-brained of all was for a married woman of thirty years of age, from whom one would have expected more sense, to seat herself at midnight on a stone step in the open air like a mad-woman!"

"Oh, thou most abominable of all Bears!" I at length exclaimed, again regaining my voice; "every word that thou speakest is false. In the first place I am no thirty years' old woman; and in the second—"

"In the second, third, last," cried Bear, embracing me, "thou art my own wife; and I promise thee, that if it happen again that thou art so thoughtless, I will be very angry with thee."

Did you ever hear the like, Maria? For my part, I was so surprised by such an overturning of all my hopes of praise, that I fell quite out of the conceit, and became as still as a good sheep. This naturally pleased my lord and Bear very well, and now he tyrannised further, and compelled me to go to rest, during which time he would attend to the patients, and make the necessary arrangements for them. What was to be done? I must obey, and I acknowledge that I reaped the benefit of it. In a little lovely boudoir, furnished with red and white damask, which lay on the other side of the drawing-room, I enjoyed some hours of sweet refreshing sleep. When I awoke, I saw Hagar's head thrust in at the door. Her countenance beamed with a joy that seemed to border on wildness. "He will live! He will live!" she exclaimed to me. She stooped over me, and kissed passionately many times my hand; raised herself again; went to and fro in the room, smote her hands together, and laughed almost convulsively; while she exclaimed—"He will live! He will live!"

She made a strange impression on me. The wild and passionate in her nature, associated with the ideas which I entertain of her connexion with Brunc, excited my aversion while her love and beauty irresistibly attracted me.

When I entered the drawing-room it was full of people. There was Elsa with a whole load of things for her mistress; there was Tuttin; there were Jean Jacques and Jane Marie. Bear stood like a Pasha, if a Pasha ever stands, in the middle of the drawing-room, answering inquiries, issuing commands, sending hither and thither. To my great amazement and joy I heard that Ma chère mère had been bled. She had willingly consented to this proposal of Bear. Singularly enough she has faith in surgery, but the most insuperable distrust to medicine, and will on no condition take it. After the bleeding she had had more rest, but as yet no sleep.

I had now to relate to Jean Jacques and Jane Marie all that had occurred, and the manner with which they received it gave me sincere pleasure. They were both touched, and cordially glad at the reconciliation, although this will essentially change their prospects. Elsa interrupted our conversation, to call me in to Ma chère mère. I found Bear with her.

"He wishes that I should sleep," said Ma chère mère, not without sadness; "he wishes that I should close my eyes in rest, and I have not yet by the light of day beheld my only son; he who has just ventured his own life to save mine. But I tell you that till I have seen him I can have no rest, neither in soul nor body; and had I but strength in my legs I would, upon my soul! ask nobody's leave."

"Bear!" said I aside to him, "hinder her not. Let her have her will. The will of man is, indeed, his kingdom of heaven."

"Dear child, dear child, with thy kingdoms of heaven!" said Bear with a fierce grimace, and rubbed his head, "such kingdoms of heaven may lead to hell, or at least to death, if they are permitted at improper times."

"But thou thyself seest, that here will certainly be no kingdom of heaven, if Ma chère mère have not her will. And that, too, is perfectly natural. I should be in her place exactly the same. Let her see her son; Bruno, indeed, can come to her."

"Nay, the devil! he must not to-day stir from the spot. If they must of necessity see one another, and agitate one another, then it will be better that she be moved to him. It is inconceivable that people cannot——"

"Don't stand there talking," said Ma chère mère passionately, "but come hither, and if you have any reason and feeling, help me to my son. I promise that the interview shall be short, and that we will not speak."

Bear resisted no longer. He raised her on one side, Elsa and I on the other, and thus carried her, and set her in a great easy-chair by Bruno's bedside. It was a silent, but affecting scene. We saw in both how complete the reconciliation was. When Ma chère mère had sate thus, probably ten minutes, she laid her hand, as it were, in blessing, on Bruno's forehead and breast. He would have spoken, but she laid in prohibition her hand on his lips. A tear bedewed his cheek. Oh! how I longed to see such a one in the eyes of the mother; but they continued dry, although they were full of love. She gave us a sign that she would be removed; and it was high time, for she was violently affected, and deadly pale.

When she was again in her bed, she lay for a moment still and with folded hands seemed to pray. She then beckoned me to her, and said with a proud joy, "How large he is grown; a handsome man, Fransiska! I can now see that he is very like my husband—a real Hercules! Nay, nay, he is descended from nothing weakly or ugly, on either the father or mother's side. But all this is foolish," added she with a sigh, which was meant to be humble, "therein consists not the worth of man."

Ma chère mère allowed Jean Jacques and Jane Marie now to come in, and was very friendly towards them. When Jane Marie understood that I was to continue at Ramm so long as Ma chère mère remained there, she became quite short towards me, and took a cold leave. That gave me pain. But so far as I am concerned, I must prepare myself to continue here so long as Ma chère mère is ill. She and Bear wish it, nor I the less so. I could not possibly leave her so long as her state is at all doubtful. "If she could only sleep," says Bear, "all danger would be over." But sleep comes not into her eyes, and an internal restlessness wears her. I have written this during the two days which I have spent here, and during those two days she has not slept a moment, and persists in her refusal to take anything. Even Bruno's entreaties in this case have no influence over her

Medicine, she says, has always been poison to her. I have my desk in her bed-chamber ; she hears with pleasure the light scratching of my pen ; she says it quietens her. Bruno is better ; but is not allowed to move, nor scarcely to speak. Bear is really a very strict doctor ; that I see. I almost think I shall not have him for mine. I told him this ; but he only made a contemptuous grimace, and said, "That we shall soon see." I know not how I can write in so gay a mood—Ma chère mère's condition distresses me much—but I have so many things to divert my attention, and besides this, Ma chère mère herself is in so fresh and happy a humour, that I cannot be otherwise than glad on account of it. God only grant that this affair have no sorrowful end ! May I be able in my next letter to say that all here is, indeed, as joyful as it now is well.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ramm, September 6th.

I AM completely inundated with inquiries, notes, and visits. The rumour of that which has taken place flies about, and has changed the whole neighbourhood into a committee of inquiry. All stream hitherward. Everybody asks, wonders, hopes, and congratulates. Ma chère mère appears to be the highest notability of the country. Even the mayor and aldermen of the town have sent to inquire how she is. She has by degrees come to be regarded as half a magistrate herself, since she so emphatically exerts herself against all disorders in the town, and gives occasionally to the mayor and aldermen good dinners.

The state of Ma chère mère, alas ! continues exactly the same. It is now three days since she has slept, and Bear is very much troubled about it ; which, however, I rather see than hear. At this moment I receive a note from Serena, which I here transcribe.

"Good Fransiska, give me a word, and if possible a consolatory one. There are such strange reports ! People say that Madame Mansfelt has been in great danger ; that Mr. — (thou knowest who I mean) rescued her from it ; that she has recognised her son in him ; that they are reconciled,

but both are now dying. It is said that thy life has also been in danger. People talk so much, and such confused things are said. I called on thee yesterday at Rosenvik, but thou wast not there ! thou wast at Ramm, Sissa said. Thy flowers looked out of spirits. I endeavoured to refresh them with water, which succeeded ; but I also, Fanny, am out of spirits, and all which since yesterday I have read to grandpapa is Latin for me. My good, dear Fanny, send a cheering word to thy

“ SERENA.”

Yes, Serena ! not merely one word, but many shalt thou have. I reproach myself for not having prevented thy wish. Good heart ! who would not give thee comfort. I leave thee a moment, Maria, in order to write to Serena.

8th.

Still the same and the same ! No sleep—no rest. An inveterate watchfulness—an incessant, internal restlessness, which for those who are about Ma chère mère is something indescribably painful. She herself is now fully persuaded that she shall die, and has to-day made her will. I was present, and must indeed admire her immovable sense of right, as well as the conscientiousness with which she embraces everything which in any manner is placed beneath her protection. Remarkable is also the thorough knowledge which she has of all, the smallest affairs, and the exactness and perspicuity with which she regulates whatever concerns them. It is an iron regularity, which descends even to littleness ; but in taking leave of earthly concerns this is worthy of respect. Ma chère mère showed herself on this occasion as she has done her whole life through—strict, upright, and systematic, benevolent without boasting, firm in friendship, and grateful.

At the same time I cannot bring myself to believe that she will die. Bear appears rather to fear for her understanding. He speculates on giving her a sleeping potion ; but how she is to be persuaded to drink it is another matter. She herself will not hear it said that she shall live. She has, as she says, taken her resolution, and has fully resigned herself to death, and thinks only how best to prepare herself for it.

9th.

A singular scene ! What strange ideas can there not enter into people's heads ! This morning Ma chère mère ordered a joiner to be sent for—nobody could conceive wherefore. When he arrived, she sent for him into her chamber, and commanded him to measure her for—her coffin !

She gave the most particular directions as to the ornaments of the coffin, and made me write down what should stand as the inscription on the breastplate. The door of Bruno's room, during this proceeding, was carefully shut.

"And now, Master Svensson," said she, as this was all accomplished, "what is to be the price of the coffin ?"

Embarrassed and astounded with these proceedings, the joiner bethought himself awhile, and then said, "Fifty dollars banco, your ladyship."

"Are you mad, Master Svensson ?" demanded keenly Ma chère mère. "Fifty dollars banco ! five and twenty rix-dollars more than you charged for the coffin of my late husband ? Bethink yourself what you are saying. I can show you the bill for the General's coffin, Master Svensson."

"Oak, your ladyship, is become so dear since then."

"And who, the devil ! told you to make it of oak ? For what I care you may use birch, or alder, or fir, or what wood you will. The wretched body is but dust, I think, whether it lie in a coffin of oak or of deal. 'Let death but strike, we're all alike.' It is true I am of an old noble family, and so was also my husband, the late General Mansfelt ; but what then, Master Svensson,—

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman ?

And where is he when the body lies in the grave ? Take deal, or rather birch, for my coffin, good Master Svensson, and let it be fifty rix-dollars."

"Sixty rix-dollars, your ladyship."

"Fifty rix-dollars, Master Svensson, I won't give more ; and you may regulate yourself accordingly. Fifty rix-dollars, money of the realm, I say. Not a shilling more ; but I invite you to the funeral feast which my people will hold. Remember, Fransiska, that Master Svensson is to be there, or—I will remember it myself, when I give the orders for the funeral. Good-bye, my good Master Svensson. The

agreement stands. Thanks for your trouble, Master Svensson. Good-bye!"

So much as I have seen of Ma chère mère's singularities, I must yet confess that this scene amazed me not a little. I saw, however, clearly that no fondness for peculiarity, but an inveterate propensity to manage and rule everything, led her to bespeak her own coffin, and settle its character and price. Ma chère mère seemed to find the whole business perfectly natural; and said to me as soon as the joiner was gone, "These workpeople are always greedy animals; one must make the closest bargains with them; but their fox shall not bite my goose." On this she proceeded to give the orders for her funeral. She dictated, and I wrote, how the whole should be arranged; how many pounds of confections should be purchased, and so on. She ordered a messenger to be sent to the rector of her parish, to request him to come the next day to Ramm. "I will," she said, "die as becomes a Christian." All these things being settled, she expressed much satisfaction, and asked me to give her somewhat to drink. "The old beverage," said she, "I am grown quite tired of. I would fain have something different, but I know not what."

A lucky thought occurred to me, and I hastened to say, "I have a receipt for a kind of lemonade; properly a kind of toast and water; in a word, a very refreshing and excellent drink. Let me make Ma chère mère some of that."

"Do it, Fransiska. Thou art not without resources. Something always occurs to thee; and that is a fortunate nature. Better to be without bread than without resources."

I hastened immediately to Bear, and imparted to him my proposition. He was quite delighted with my inventiveness, and began immediately to brew his composing draught and my toast and water; since both of them were one and the same thing.

Bruno in the mean time is in a restless and gloomy mood, and is not free from the delirium of fever. He loves his mother really extremely, and cannot reconcile himself to the idea of her dying. Bear endeavours to pacify him with kind words and hopes. Hagar is much about him, but this seems to irritate him. He treats her harshly, but she bears all with slavish servility. How deep must a woman have sunk before

she can suffer herself to be so treated, and like a hound creep fawning to the foot which kicks it away ! How unlike to this spirit of a slave is the free but unassuming mind with which an honoured and beloved wife devotes herself to the object of her pure devotion. Poor Hagar !

Ma chère mère cannot bear Hagar, and she shrinks from her sharp and penetrating eye. "She is certainly his Dulcinea," said Ma chère mère yesterday to me. "I shall speak to Bruno upon it. I cannot bear such things!"

The composing draught is now ready, and I will fetch it. God help me ! It seems to me as if I was playing a deceitful part towards Ma chère mère, and that is very uncomfortable to me.

Later.

It is done ! It succeeded, but it was within a hair of all being lost. As I received the cup with the draught out of Bear's hand, I said, "Bear, thou art, however, quite sure that this will not sleep her to death?"

"Dost thou think I am a quack, Fanny?"

"God forbid ! thou art Æsculapius himself; but—but—oh ! Bear, it goes hard with me to deceive her."

"Hadst thou rather that she lose her reason, or that she have a stroke ? My little Fanny, it won't do to hesitate. Do it quickly, and then it is done the easiest. With the help of God this draught will save her."

I went to Ma chère mère, and gave her the cup, while I said as confidently as possible, "Here, Ma chère mère, is my cordial."

"Ah ! that is famous !" said she, raised herself, tasted the draught, started, and made a wry face. "What is this for a cursed gallimathias that thou has stirred together, Fransiska?" she exclaimed ; "it tastes actually poisonous." She fixed at the same time one of her keenest looks on me. Had I had a poison-cup in my innocent hand, I could not have trembled more, or looked more criminal.

"Thou unlucky Bear," thought I, nearly ready to cry, "now must I empty the cup myself to testify my innocence, even if I should sleep till the day of judgment for it."

"God have mercy on thee," continued Ma chère mère, with the same look, "if thou art in conspiracy with thy husband to deceive me ?"

"And if it were so," said I, as I threw my free arm round her neck, and kissed her, and wet her cheek with tears, called forth half by tenderness half by fear, "if it were indeed so, would not you, mother, be so good to your children as to take the draught for their sakes; and believe them, that though it tastes somewhat unpleasant, it will only do you good?"

Ma chère mère looked at me for a moment seriously but friendlily, and then said, "Thou art an artful woman, Fransiska, and a good child, and knowest how to manage the old one; and for this quality she loves thee, and will now do as thou wishest, come of it what will. Skål, my child!" And with one draught she emptied the cup.

I embraced her, thanked her, and wept in my joy. She patted me kindly on the cheek, and seemed to experience pleasure in seeing herself beloved. I ran in triumph to Bear, and showed him the empty cup.

"Ay, ay," said he, "I thought it would pass, and the draught not taste so bad neither; by my troth, it was not easy to prepare it."

"Thou conceited Bear!" I interrupted him; "cease to boast of thy abominable draught." And I now related to him that which had passed; and I must do him the justice to say that he changed the praises of his drink into glorifications of myself. I cherish a quiet hope that the draught already operates. Ma chère mère does not indeed sleep, but she is still. It is nine o'clock. I shall to-night watch by her.

11th.

Now she sleeps. God be praised, she sleeps sound and well! It is a pleasure to see her sleeping. Bear has driven every one in the house to bed. No one dare stir; it is still as a grave. Hu! how came that word into my pen? I erase it. I watch in Ma chère mère's chamber with Elsa, whose indefatigable zeal I can but admire. Bear sits within with Bruno, in order to keep him as quiet as possible while they await the result of the sleep. He has the best hopes. That we may maintain the greatest possible silence, Bear and I have agreed to telegraph the slightest change in Ma chère mère by small strips of paper, which I write upon, and stick in the keyhole; and in the mean time, to keep myself awake,

I employ myself in drawing Elsa's profile, which in the ether-like background of the lamp-light stands dark, sharp as if cut in stone, and immovably turned towards and gazing on the sleeper.

Two o'clock.

Ma chère mère still sleeps; sleeps deep, and perspires profusely. I have telegraphed this to Bear. "Good sign," he has telegraphed back. God be praised! now I hope all is well.

Elsa's portrait is like. The original sits yet on the same spot, and looks immovably in the same direction.

Four o'clock.

Elsa has just come to me, and whispered in my ear with a scarce perceptible voice, "Do you think her life will be saved? Do you think she will wake?"

"Yes; I believe it with certainty."

"If she die, I will die too."

"Why so, dear Elsa?"

"What should I do here on the earth without her? And then—she must have some one in heaven to wait on her, and be at hand day and night."

"She will then be with God's angels, Elsa."

"Yes, dear madame; but they cannot fall so exactly into her humours as I can. They have not lived with her forty years as I have."

Elsa returned to her post, and took her former position. I saw again the dark profile on the clear background. Elsa's faithful, mountain-fast devotion touched me deeply, and reminded me of Goëthe's words—"It is not our merit only, but their truth which often secures to us the hearts of others."

Six o'clock.

Ma chère mère still sleeps; sleeps sound, and by the streaming daylight her countenance looks awfully pale. Think only if she should sleep her last sleep! Bear and I have had a brisk correspondence on this long sleep through the key-hole. Will you have a specimen of it? for with the whole of it I will not burden the post.

Strip 1. "She sleeps, sleeps, sleeps. I begin to fear that she will awake no more!"
2. "She will wake."
3. "Oracles have heretofore deceived themselves."

- 4. "But not now."
- 5. "Wiseman Bear, and Prophet, tell,
Know'st thou all things and so well—
Who is that, in deepest night,
Who calls thee glory, crown, and light ?
- 6. "No one else, as I opine,
But this little wife of mine."
- 7. "Wiseman Bear, and Prophet, tell,
Know'st thou all things and so well—
Who is that, in deepest night,
At thy conceit who laughs outright?"
- 8. "No other than my wife alone,
To me her riddles are well known ;
For conceit, read penetration,
And tagging rhymes, note—botheration.

But enough of this child's play.

Nine o'clock.

Away with coffin, confections, and funeral ! Ma chère mère lives, and shall live ! She has awoke, is quiet, quite sensible, and feels quite well, though extremely faint. Bear guarantees her life. We have embraced right and left in our joy. And Bruno ! I must weep as I saw him clasping Bear's knees. I will love Bruno, for he can love. Ma chère mère herself seems somewhat astonished, but quiet and satisfied. I gave her just now her tea. As she took the cup out of my hand, she looked at me with a kind and roguish countenance, and gave me a little blow on the cheek. She is again gone to sleep, and I will now also allow myself a little rest.

Eleven o'clock.

All goes on well, extremely well ; we shall all be quickly quite right, except that I shall contract a home-sickness for my little Rosenvik. Ma chère mère recovers her strength rapidly, and can already stand again ; but she will not go hence till Bruno is well enough to accompany her to Carlsfors, and earlier I am not to be allowed to return home. "Patience !" says Bear. A detestable word. It is exactly when I hear it that I become impatient. In the mean time I send off this letter, embrace thee, and thank God for that which is.

CHAPTER XV.

Ramm, September 16th.

HAS it never happened to you, Maria, that you have regarded a certain person, exactly as Robinson Crusoe regarded his island, as a sterile ground, and suddenly a chance, a little voyage of discovery, has made you, like the said Robinson, aware of a lovely region, rich in the most excellent and delicious productions? Voyages of discovery in the world which we call "Man," turn out, very likely, as into other regions, often ill enough; and the explorer, not seldom, remains sticking, like Captain Ross, in the ice; but me have they most frequently conducted into a pleasant country. So today. Will you follow me in a voyage of such discovery? My island is called Lagman Hök.

Behold him planted on a stool, like a fir-tree on its rock, in Ma chère mère's room at Ramm. See there also, sunk in a deep-stuffed chair, like a bird in its nest, the lively Miss Hellevi Husgafvel. See, stately, and only like herself, Ma chère mère, leaning back in one corner of her sofa; see Bruno, like a beautiful night, darkening and adorning the other sofa corner. See, further, two every-day figures sitting faithfully together like a pair of turtle-doves, or a bear and his bearess. See comfort in the room, and satisfaction on the faces of the people, and hear what in the twilight of the evening rolls lightly from the heart, over the tongue, and now reaches thy ear.

Miss Husgafvel. Unkle Hök! you look this evening so thoroughly finished and perfect, that I feel myself quite oppressed by it. It would really do me good, if you would but in this twilight make confession of some little weakness. For instance, I am persuaded that you have in some little thing a slight touch of covetousness. Every man has such a one, I am convinced, if he will but honestly hunt it out.

Ma chère mère. "Sweep first before your own door, before you sweep before your neighbour's," says the proverb. Begin with yourself, cousin Husgafvel, and confess your sins.

Miss Husgafvel. I, poor sinful mortal, confess, from the bottom of my heart, that I have a hankering after pins and waste paper, which approaches to a real avarice.

Lagman Hök (gravely). And I know nothing on earth which is so dear to me as bottles, be they full or empty; and it is with the greatest difficulty that I prevent myself boxing the ears of a servant when he breaks one.

Miss Husgafvel. Ha! glorious! glorious! my dear, excellent uncle. Hear, you good people there, do neither better nor worse than us. Confess obligingly your sins. Your avarice, good Doctor?

Bear (laconic). Paper!

Miss Husgafvel. Good, therefore the fewer prescriptions. But we cannot live without them. Madame Werner, yours?

Fransiska. Needles and thread.

Miss Husgafvel. You, Madame Mansfelt, won't you throw your contribution into our little collection?

Ma chère mère. Why not? But I am afraid it would be quite too much if I threw all my covetousness into the scale. So content yourselves with what I do not otherwise willingly give away—with ends of ribbon and old linen. But remember, my friends, “He who does not waste a penny, gets two;” “He who wastes more than he wins, soon has an empty larder.” “He who gathers, has.”

There was a short pause. The turn came to Bruno, to confess his innocent failings; but whether he had none such, and that sounds abominable, or whether he had paid no attention to our gossip, he showed no disposition to shrive himself, and none of us felt a desire to require it of him. He sat with downcast eyes, sunk into himself, and supported his bound-up head on his hand. Lagman Hök broke the embarrassing silence, and replied to *Ma chère mère*'s words—“Madame Mansfelt is quite right, we must every one, in his own way, be a gatherer.”

Miss Husgafvel. Take care, uncle, that you do not make out that our sins are virtues. You know, it is written, that we must lay up our treasures there where no thief breaks in and steals.

Lagman Hök. Much there, but a little also here. It is reasonable enough, if one looks rightly at the thing.

Ma chère mère. I am just of that opinion.

Fransiska. What is the whole human race but a great procession of seekers and gatherers? But, alas! how many there are who find nothing, or preserve nothing!

Lagman Hök. And that, especially, because they have not sought and found themselves. At the bottom, every man seeks chiefly harmony with himself. But you must understand what I mean ?

Fransiska. Give us an example, Lagman Hök—a living one, if possible ; then we may come to a clear perception, without much beating about.

Miss Husgafvel. You, for instance, worthy uncle, have to a certainty found yourself ; for never did I see a person so quiet, so secure, and I may also say, so wise and good. Tell us how you sought, and how you found yourself.

Fransiska. O yes ! tell us that, good Lagman.

Lagman Hök. Do you know what you ask of me, ladies ? Nothing less than the grand event of the history of my life.

Miss Husgafvel and Fransiska. O yes, yes ! tell us the history of your life.

Lagman Hök. It is impossible to refuse the request of two such amiable ladies ; therefore I will begin at once with the most difficult confession ; for you probably are not aware that he who now addresses you is—an unsuccessful author. It is well that it is now so dark. Well, after the first hard step is made, the rest will be easier.

“ My father was a meritorious writer, and educated me to tread in the same path. My endowments seemed to foster his wishes. I early wrote poems, dramatic pieces for name-days and birthdays ; and received sweetmeats and praise, and already saw afar off the laurel crown. I was brought up surrounded by the works of poets. I read them through and through, till I knew them by rote, and took their thoughts for my own. My parents were ambitious, and my domineering desire of distinction was by them yet more stimulated. Some of my poetical attempts met with approbation from the public, and praise in the newspapers ; and through this, intoxicated, as well as by the encouragement of my parents and the encomiums of my young friends, amongst whom was most prominent one young and sanguine man, named Lärka, I resolved, like Byron, with one spring to plant myself on the summit of the Parnassus of the present age. I wrote a Tragedy in five acts, and——wait a moment. I must linger a little over this hour of apparent happiness. Really great poets possess, as I believe, a certain reflective repose, even in

the moment of inspiration. They are given up to their subject, and embody themselves with it in a sacred earnestness. When they contemplate that which they have produced, they are rather disposed to feel dissatisfied than satisfied with their creations. This proceeds from their deep comprehension of the greatness of life. It is exactly because they feel it thus, that they are great. Little spirits, writers who are enraptured with themselves and their works, should tremble, and call to mind the words of Boileau,

Le sot à chaque vers soi-même s'admire.

“ I feared nothing as I wrote my tragedy. I was transported, and held my enthusiasm for that of the public. I marched with great strides to and fro in my chamber, declaiming my verses. At effective passages, that is, such as appeared effective to me, I stood still, and listened to the acclamations of the public. They elated me. I leaped for joy, and came down again, but not to my senses. The partiality of my parents and friends favoured my intoxication. ‘ Thou, wilt rise high,’ said Lärka. I believed it; and between myself and immortal honour saw only a representation.

“ It took place. My hopes were wound up to the highest pitch ; my tragedy—fell. There was not a single clap of approbation. Silence ; some hissing ; even laughter. Some days after came the critics, in the public papers, who left not a solitary hair on the head of my Christiern II., and sought to rob me of every hope ; ay, of ever being able to win the veriest little shrivelled leaf of laurel. I knew well that they had done the same to many a one before, who nevertheless had become a great and renowned writer ; and I resolved not to suffer myself by such means to be frightened from my aim. But in vain did I endeavour to console myself with these thoughts, of the stupidity of the critics, and the experience of great writers ; my annihilating critic was the whole public, and what was still worse—myself. That is the last tribunal, from which there is no appeal. Yet in the first moments after the fall of my Christiern, I was far removed from this. Humbled,—but more exasperated than humbled,—I determined to do battle with the critics, yes, even with the public itself ; with the first in a bitter reply, with the second by yet another tragedy. But ther stepped forward my never-to-

be-sufficiently-honoured friend, the lady of General Mansfeld, here present; and with her powerful and sound understanding, which already distinguished her in her younger years, held me back.

“ ‘ My friend,’ said she, ‘ better fly than fight ill. It is too late to cry halves! when the sausage is eaten up. It is unnecessary to carry wood into the forest; why cast butter into the fire which burns you? Let the people cry; and see well to it that they are not in the right. I do not profess to be a judge of your piece, and of such things, but I tell you that it does not much please me. It appears to me forced and laboured. But suppose I am wrong, and the people are wrong; good;—then will your piece probably one day receive justice. That, I believe, has happened before now, both with books and men. But if you find, after sufficient proof, that the people are right, then give up your piece; it will do no good to fight for it; and if you have written a bad piece, well, you may yet write a better. And if you cannot do that, then you are not fit for an author, and—what then? Are you on that account a worse man? Do not many other ways stand open to become an able and happy member of society? Dear Hök, only take care that you open your eyes at the right time. It is so well to make the first injury the last, and to receive the bitter teaching with thankfulness.’

“ I took the words of my valued friend to heart, went home, and reflected in deep silence on my unsuccessful tragedy. There fell a veil from my eyes. I had not been prudent enough to avoid becoming intoxicated, but I was not so mad as not to become sober again. I saw clearly that my tragedy only resembled those of Schiller, in the same degree that apes resemble men; and I threw it into the fire. For the rest, it was not easy for me to take my resolution in this matter. I had prepared myself for the field of literature, yet I discovered, more and more, my want of creative power—of the poetic faculty. I had no inclination to another employment; I knew not what to undertake,—what I should become. I had lost the rudder, and my bark was the sport of wind and wave. To this was added the disappointment and distress of my parents; the long faces of my friends; and their ‘ Poor Hök! ’ Even Lärka sighed ‘ Poor Hök! ’ This was not to

be endured. Then came again my excellent young friend, and procured me from my parents permission to travel in foreign countries ; to drive, as she said, the affair out of my heart.

" I travelled—often on foot, for my means were small—through a great part of Europe ; travelled two years ; saw life in manifold forms ; thought, and compared. My misfortune in the world of fancy had strengthened my understanding, and the suffering which I had experienced inspired me with an urgent desire to comprehend that which everywhere, and in all circumstances of life, with a certain degree of cultivation, gives to existence peace and independence. Amongst many observations which I made, I will only allude to one, trivial as it may appear, because it became of the highest importance to me in life. The world is rich in the excellent and the beautiful. Truly to comprehend, to value, and to admire the beautiful, is a great medium of ennoblement, of peace, of happiness. Should the proud passion to create, which reigns in so many young and active souls, change itself into a desire for discernment, into a capacity to admire the beautiful and the excellent,—then would their restlessness be converted into repose, the world would contain a less amount of presumptuous and dissatisfied men, and feeble productions of art ; and the really great talents would find more admirers, and would rise higher. Artists and connoisseurs are necessary to each other, and mutually elevate each other. The best and happiest men I found amongst those who united with a useful regulated activity in the middle ranks of life a sublime feeling for the beautiful, and a capacity to enjoy the noblest creations of art.

" After my two years of travel and observation, I returned, sound in soul and body, and began a new career of life. Yet I renounced not literature ; on the contrary, the more my situation in life became determined, with a more intimate love did I attach myself to this life-giving fountain. But I had learned to know myself. I strove no longer for the artist's renown, for the crown of laurel and of thorns ; but I sought to perfect in me the enlightened lover and judge of art. I desired that, even if I myself could not produce the beautiful, no one should exceed me in the skill thoroughly to estimate and to enjoy it. And I can say, that in this I have not been

altogether disappointed. Since I have renounced a vain endeavour, and learned to know my one talent, I have become peaceful and happy. I am now old, and every year removes me farther from the world; but not from the eternal beauty which thus inexhaustibly renews itself in ever-varying forms. I hang with firm love thereon; it endows my heart with new youth; it prevents my thoughts growing grey with my hair; and inspires me with a hope, that hereafter in the true native land of beauty, I shall become one of its not unworthy worshippers."

So spoke the old man, and from his mild blue eyes glanced a lively satisfaction. We thanked him heartily, and I exclaimed—somewhat thoughtlessly—"Oh! I wish that all men, as well those who have found as those who have not found, before they depart from this theatre of action, would make their confessions. I am certain that no book would be pleasanter or more beneficial than a collection of such autobiographies. They would become good guidance for the inquirers in life. Best Miss Husgafvel! will you not at once throw in your contribution? I will undertake to sketch it out. You certainly are one of those who have sought and have already found."

"I cannot say wholly no to that," answered Miss Hellevi; "although much yet remains to be done before I have obtained full satisfaction with myself. Yet I have already found far more in the world than I dreamed of in my youth; and if you, worthy friend, will hear a tedious history, I will willingly relate it to you.

"I have passed through no great misfortunes; have to complain of no great disappointments. I have gone quietly enough through my world; but I have suffered ennui, merciless ennui, and therefore can truly say that I have borne the heaviest burden in the world. My father—be good enough, my friends, to pay particular attention to this remark—my father was a man of honour, upright and true. All the Husgafvels in a direct descending line have been of this character; loving the right even to inflexibility; straightforward in bodily bearing and in principles; swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left; and I know not how it has happened that I have become so unworthy a descendant from my honour-meriting ancestors. My father, as observed, had an

admirable moral character, and therefore is he now happy in heaven ; but he had extremely strict and old-fashioned notions regarding the education of women. He believed, for instance, that it was good for young maidens to suffer tedium, or as it was called, to be bridled. He was a sworn foe of all those things which he called vanity ; in the catalogue of which stood many an innocent pleasure. He abhorred also pedantic learnedness in women ; but in this rubric was a multitude of useful and happiness-conferring varieties of knowledge laid under the ban. Above all things he prized household virtues ; but those again were confined to a narrow circle. We must weave, spin, sew, attend to the kitchen and domestic affairs ; study Kajsa Warg,*—and any other book he saw with great displeasure in our hands ; and by such means prepare ourselves to become able wives and mistresses of families. He himself maintained a strict oversight over me and my five sisters. My sisters wove, I spun ; each one in turn had to attend the kitchen for a week. Well, the day went over ; agreeable it was not. I especially found it often insupportably long, particularly as I advanced in years. My spinning appeared to me wholly useless, as I knew that we possessed property.

“ Years flew by. With the exception of some old relations, strangers were never seen in our house. The sisters wove, and I spun—I confess it, with ever-wearier hand. The emptiness of my soul and of my life oppressed me ; I had often vapours and tears, I knew not rightly why. The good aunt Anna Stina, who supplied the place of mother to us, was a genuine Husgafvel, and obeyed in all things the will of her brother ; but, for the rest, was very kind to us. She had constantly on her tongue, ‘ Advice to my Daughter,’† and often preached to us in the words—

Our household—that is our republic ;
Our politics, the toilet—

together with this,

And our belles-lettres, I aver,
Lie in our bracelets, gloves, and rings.

We lived on a remote estate in the country. Life in the

* Kajsa Warg, authoress of a cookery-book much used in Sweden.

† “ Advice to my Daughter,” a poem of the celebrated Swedish poetess, Anna-Lengren.

country may be one of the richest on earth ; but it may also be one of the poorest. If the great Book of Nature be opened to the eye of him who resides there, and illumined with the light of heaven, from his little knoll he can see and enjoy all the glory of the world ; but if he see in Nature only the potato-field which gives him food, then is this golden vein closed for him, and he himself stands like the potato-plant, fast rooted in the earth. Our family was much in this condition. I must, however, except myself. The order of nature early attracted my admiration, its particular objects awoke my desire of possession. I was early, though in the strictest secrecy, a collector of plants, stones, and shells. We must often accompany my father on the long rounds which he took, in order to see how his corn prospered. It must have been very edifying to see how we went along in a row like a flock of snipes, sometimes in the heat of the sun, sometimes in the wet. I, in the mean time, was very often left behind, lost in the observation of some plant, or of some small insect. On account of this, as well as of my reveries, I was afterwards often rallied, in a manner which, though it was very gentle, yet wounded my sensitive feeling of honour deeply. My father often amused himself with throwing off little family pictures, such as our house was to present in the future. For instance, he would say, ‘Anna Maria winds, Lotta weaves, Lizzy goes and gives out sugar and spice for dinner, Josepha spins, Greté Marie feeds the fowls,’ and at the end of the family-picture always came, ‘and Hellevi sits and gazes at the sun,’ or some such unprofitable proceeding, which conclusion always took such effect on me that I burst into tears. To be the only useless member of the family ! no, that was far too insupportable, far too humbling. When now came my week of housekeeping, I jingled my keys actively, to let my father hear how zealously I discharged the duties of my office. Ah ! it was all to no purpose ! In the next family sketch it was still the same ; ‘and Hellevi sits and gazes at the sun.’ In my family it was the fixed and perpetual adage —‘Hellevi will never make a good housekeeper—and then what is she fit for ?’ In this belief died my father and my aunt ; in this belief yet live my sisters.

“I have stated how we spent the days, I must now say a word on the evenings. At seven o’clock my father assembled

us every evening in his room. We sate there, employed on our sewing and embroidery, and that round a great circular table with two candles, about which there generally fell out some contention. My father sate at some distance from us, at a little table, with an eye-shade before him, and read aloud to us. This should have been a great pleasure to us; but, in the first place, the French history on which we were, I know not how long engaged, was of a very old edition; and in the next, my father's mode of reading was extremely slow and monotonous. When now in autumn and winter evenings the rain and snow beat against the windows, and the storm without howled its mournful song to the heavy long-drawn-out words within, no one need wonder that the spirit of sleep became mighty in us, that we nodded to one another, as in rivalry, over our embroidery. When one of us resigned ourselves to the overpowering influence of Morpheus, then winked and blinked aunt Anna Stina waggishly across to the rest, as much as to say, 'There! the sister's gone!'

"At nine o'clock all were aroused, as well the waking as the sleeping, by my father pushing back his chair; and we drew, one after another—the precedence of age being, in the Husgafvel family, ever held sacred—into the dining-room to supper. This was moderate, and did not last more than ten minutes. Hence we returned again to my father's room, where we must continue till the clock struck ten. During this time we were not to work, but exclusively to devote ourselves to conversation. Every one of us had her appointed place in the room. Mine was by the stove, where the warmth made me some recompense for the frost which reigned in the discourse; for all circumstances which might have lent a living interest to it, were strongly interdicted; and when I, at times, dared to step on the forbidden ground, I was speedily warned off it again, with the remark that women had nothing to do with such subjects. Our conversation might touch upon nothing but the little occurrences of the day, especially those within the house; of acquaintance, genealogies, and matters of business. This made, according to my taste, a meagre entertainment, and gladly would I have stayed away; but we were neither allowed to do that, nor to be silent during this conversation hour, but every one must say something. When any one of us had not opened her

mouth for some time, she was called upon in a friendly voice to say something. In order to vary a little our entertainment, my father sometimes took out an old box, in which lay a number of curiosities, which had, probably for the twentieth time, been laid out one after another, turned about, and contemplated. It was taken ill of any of the daughters who did not stand round the table and pay attention to the contents of the box. It was a misfortune that my father never would cease to regard us as little children: but the little clasps and rings; the profiles of grandfather and grandmother; the little box with the feathers of the canary-bird in it, which delighted the maiden of nine years old; the magic lantern, which had excited her whole curiosity; could not possibly interest the woman of five-and-twenty, now compelled to stand by, and regard the contents of the box with a weary and indifferent gaze.

"I observed that in the conversation hour, after supper, we must always say something, though we were not allowed to say what we would. Hence often arose the most ridiculous little miseries. One example may give a conception of these. My sisters and myself had one day seen how a little herd of vagabond sucking-pigs had come swarming into the courtyard, and how they were chased round by the three yard-dogs. This precious event of real life we hoarded up in our faithful memories the whole day through, in order to season the evening's conversation. By chance we came this evening into my father's room, not in a connected line, but with sundry breaks and pauses. Anna Maria, who took her place first, told the story of the little pigs and the dogs; the same did Lotta, who came after her; the same Lizzy, who came after her; the same Josepha, who came after her; the same also Greté Marie, who came after her. As I at length came and took my place by the stove, and began to relate the story of the swine, my father interrupted me somewhat tartly, and said, 'Yes, this story I now hear for the sixth time.'

"I confess that this made a strong impression on me, and more than ever showed me the narrowness of our potato-plantation sort of existence. When my father two years afterwards died, and my good aunt found it quite natural that we should continue to live in the same way without prospect of change, then gazed Hellevi actually up at the sun, and

said, ‘No, thou beautiful, all-quicken sun, the world which thou illuminest cannot be so narrow, the life which thou awakest cannot be so poor! The wells of life and of virtue gush not up merely in the kitchen and the cellar. No, out to thee, out into the free air, into the beauty of the divine world!’ I knew already what I would; I knew my talent and my place, and everlasting thanks be to the worthy man, to the good and wise guardian, who extended his hand, and spite of the opposition which my independent proceeding had raised in the Husgafvel family, enabled me to achieve my object. I was seven-and-twenty years of age, gave myself out as thirty, took the Bird’s Nest on lease, and so arranged my affairs, that in a few years I could purchase it. How I have settled myself there, you, my friends, know. For these ten years have I there, every day, lifted my eyes to the sun, even when it has been veiled in clouds, and praised it, and the magnificent world which it illuminates; and for this, receive my thanks, my guardian and excellent uncle!’

A tear pearlyed itself in the living eye of Miss Hellevi as she extended her hand to Lagman Hök, who affectionately pressed and kissed it.

“And summa et facit of all this,” said Ma chère mère, “is, that there is nothing so bad out of which good may not arise, if we do but receive it in the right way.”

Fransiska. Yes; but why do so few hit the right way? All would willingly do it.

Lagman Hök. Over the causes of this, one might read a long litany. Above all, men may ascribe this failure to themselves, to their own want of courage, to their want of bravery in the sense in which the ancients used the word. We suspect not what power and elasticity the Creator has implanted in human nature. We have not the courage boldly to resign, not the courage to break resolutely forth. We will not capitulate, we will not sally, till the garrison perishes of hunger, or the enemy Death comes and takes the whole by storm.

“Devilishly well said,” muttered Bear.

Here Bruno raised himself, silent, and lost in thought. All stood up, and the strangers prepared for their departure. Miss Hellevi stood at a window. I went to her, and expressed my admiration of Lagman Hök. “That is really a most admirable and interesting man!”

"What would you say then," replied the lively Miss Husgafvel, "if you knew him as I know him. If you knew his active labours for the good of men; how he works in silence to serve clever but poor artists, and brings their productions to the light. He is certainly one of the noblest and best of men."

"He can make a will for one of my ten daughters," thought I. It was long since I had thought of my ten daughters, but after the conversation of this evening I thought much of them.

18th.

God be praised! I have a prospect of getting home. They talk of to-morrow and the next day. I yearn with my whole heart after my little Rosenvik. This mansion is large and noble, but I am not comfortable here. It is too gloomy, and a horrible number of jackdaws clamour everlastinglly on the old tower. I am in a melancholy mood, and I fancy I get continually more and more like an old family portrait which hangs in my room. Bruno and Ma chère mère are much together. They say little, but appear to be happy when they see one another and sit in the same room. Bruno seems to have satisfied Ma chère mère's scruples regarding Hagar; and since Bruno is better, Hagar is little to be seen. Bruno wins my heart wholly by his great tenderness towards his mother.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rosenvik, September 20th, 18—.

I CAME hither last evening. I cannot tell you how happy I am to be here again; how delighted I am with my rooms, my cotton furniture; with what pleasure this morning I greeted the hole in the window curtain, and saw the day stream in through it. I drink in the air of my home in long deep breaths; for the atmosphere of a beloved home has a peculiar, a refreshing, and affecting charm. I have darted hither and thither the whole day like a flame of fire, on the ground-floor and into the cellar, into the barn and garden: I have scolded and praised. With Sissa, and all that she has had under her hands, I am extremely contented; but the housemaid is dis-

orderly, and she must hear of it. Audumbla has got a calf, a bold little fellow, which, as is proper, I have named Bör. I have greeted my flowers, and stood in wonder to see them so fresh, and so carefully tended. It touched me deeply to find that Serena had been here regularly twice in the week to look after them. Dear, amiable Serena ! I loved my flowers ; I kissed them, they were so beautiful. I have cut cauliflowers for supper. In the day it had rained a little, and all in the garden stood fresh and full of fragrance, although the frost had touched here and there a leaf with yellow. It is now evening, and I sit down to my writing-table. I have seen the swans furrow the surface of the quiet lake, as they drew towards their nest on Svanö. I have gazed on the grey walls of Ramm, within which I have lately passed through so much. I am happy and thankful. I await the return of my Bear from the city, where he has been the whole day, and have prepared for him my little feast. A duck from the Helga lake shall display itself large as life on our little table, and in its train shall the cauliflowers and the freshest salad find themselves. Pancakes with raspberry jam will follow them with an agreeable grace. As the evening is cold, I have caused the sitting-room to be warmed, and Bear's well-lined dressing-gown and slippers to be displayed before the fire in due state. I will spoil him ; and while I am yet waiting for the good man, I will describe to you some of the scenes of yesterday.

Lagman Hök came to Ramm in order to accompany Ma chère mère to Carlsfors. We took our breakfast *en famille*, during which the carriages drove up. The weather was beautiful, and we were all in high spirits. Hagar assisted with the packing, but concealed herself behind the people as Ma chère mère with a lofty and proud bearing appeared upon the steps. Bruno conducted his mother to her carriage. She had not entered it before the horses shied—the horses are abominable—at the sight of a wagon which, covered with a black cloth, drove slowly into the court. Bruno shouted vehemently for it to stop. The wagon halted, and the driver came forward to Ma chère mère. It was Master Svensson, and the wagon had brought the coffin which Ma chère mère had ordered, and which, singularly enough, every one till this moment had forgotten to countermand.

This extraordinary renounter threw us into the utmost confusion. Ma chère mère was the first to recover presence of mind, and with a loud voice she said to the joiner—" Good master, I have this time, as you see, reckoned without the host. I thought to die, but it pleased the Lord to let me live ; praised be his will. But delayed is not defrayed ! The coffin will serve me another time. At all events, I abide by the agreement for the price ; and as to the feast, why, Master Svensson, I invite you to a feast of congratulation at Carlsfors on Sunday. And now, you can carry the coffin carefully thither ; I am on the way there myself."

Master Svensson was in great perplexity. His horse was tired, and besides that, he had still business in another direction. " Well, well," said Ma chère mère, " let the coffin, for the present, remain here where it is. I will send for it one of these days."

Bruno called Hagar, said something to her ; and at his beck came some people who lifted the coffin from the wagon, and under the wagoner's guidance bore it into the house. " Mark my words," said Hagar, as she went past me, " disaster will soon come into this house. This coffin will not be borne empty out of it."

I would willingly have addressed some kind expressions to Hagar at parting, for she was unhappy, and had shown herself friendly towards me, but this scene and Hagar's words confounded me ; and by the time that I had again collected my thoughts, she was gone, and Ma chère mère called to me impatiently to come.

Lagman Hök drove on first in his desobligant in order to clear the way. Then came Ma chère mère with Bruno in her great family carriage, into which she had taken Elsa ; and Bear and I closed the train in the cabriolet. We arrived nappily. It was beautiful to see Jean Jacques and Jane Marie standing in full dress in the gate, which they had adorned with festival garlands for the reception of the expected ones. It was beautiful to see how the servants and the multitude of tenants and dependents crowded round Ma chère mère as she descended from the carriage. Deep emotion and joy appeared in herself to soften down her customary pride of bearing, as supported on the arm of her son, and accompanied by a multitude of people uttering blessings and

prayers for her happiness, she slowly ascended the steps before the house. When she arrived at the top, she stood, turned round, and made a sign as if she desired silence. After she had hemmed several times as if she would clear her voice, she made the following harangue :

“ My dear friends, servants, and people ! It is with great joy that I see you here once more assembled round me, since I wish to announce to you that it has pleased the Almighty to restore to me my son Bruno Mansfelt ; who has been long absent, but is now returned, and whom you see standing at my right hand. He it is, who lately saved my life at the peril of his own ; yes, at the peril of his own ; as it pleased God to terrify my horses with his lightning, by which my life was in danger, but through this my son was saved ; though effecting this he was so much injured by the horses that he still wears a bandage on his head, as you see, my friends.

“ My friends, servants, and people ! I announce to you that I have really recognised and owned this man to be my only son, Bruno Mansfelt ; and I desire and demand from you, my friends and servants, that you conduct yourselves accordingly, and treat him in all respects as my rightful son and heir, and that you testify to him all reverence and obedience which you have hitherto testified to me ; and I equally hope and believe, that my son will prove himself worthy thereof, and will show himself to be an upright and good lord to you. And now I pray you, my dear friends, that you join with me in imploring the blessing of the Lord on his head.”

A hearty “ Long live Bruno Mansfelt ! ” burst forth at the conclusion of this speech, and the multitude rushed up the steps, and pressed round Ma chère mère and Bruno to shake hands with them. But Ma chère mère wisely cut short this much too exhausting scene. “ Thanks ! thanks ! my dear friends ! but you must now excuse it, that my son cannot longer linger amongst you, since he is yet so weak from his wounds that he requires rest. But on Sunday we will have a longer chat with one another. I invite you all together to come to Carlsfors on Sunday as my guests, and to rejoice with me. Beer and wine shall flow ; and every one who sympathises in my joy, and will drink a skål to my son, will be heartily welcome. Adieu ! adieu ! my dear children ! ”

And with this Ma chère mère took Bruno's arm and entered the house.

Bruno was in reality faint and strongly affected, and Ma chère mère was inexpressibly amiable in her tenderness and care for him. She seemed to have received her youth again, as she put Bruno's chamber in order, and made his bed herself. She was therewith as happy as a joyful young mother.

Bruno spent several hours alone in his own room. When he returned to us again he was very pale; but under the influence of his mother's gladness he became every moment more cheerful and handsome; and this worked wonderfully on us all. Ma chère mère had entreated Bear and myself most warmly to spend the evening with them; but I could not be truly happy till we rolled on our way beneath the beams of the moon towards our beloved Rosenvik. When I at length found myself in my own room at home, I leaped for very joy, and embraced and kissed my little Sissa, who returned my embrace with heart and soul. Bear stood and laughed. This morning the good man betook himself to Carlsfors before he proceeded to the city, and sent me thence these lines:

" Few words are better than none, and I am desirous that my Fanny should rejoice with me that all stands well here. Bruno is far better to-day. Ma chère mère has not been so full of the freshness and enjoyment of life for many years. I rejoice—rejoice over the reconciled, over the sunshine, over my wife; and am, in time and eternity,

" THY BEAR.

" P.S.—Don't go out to-day, dear Fanny. Ma chère mère said that she should fetch thee; but don't let her fetch thee. I would willingly spend another quiet evening with thee at Rosenvik."

Go out! No, no, my own Bear; not if the king himself come for me. Hist! I hear a carriage. It is my king—my Bear!

22nd.

Do you remember, dear Maria, a little song which begins thus—

Trust not in life, love;
Trust not in gladness!

That would I sing to-day if I had the slightest desire to sing at all ; but I have not. I threw down my pen last evening with such joy, and flew to meet my Bear ; but the moment I saw him I stood still and dumb. He was pale and looked excited, though he reached me as cordially as ever his dear hand. I exclaimed, " What ails thee, Bear ? Art thou ill ? "

" No."

" Has anything sorrowful happened ? Ah, tell me what it is ! "

" I will tell thee presently."

That presently came soon, for Bear saw my uneasiness ; and as soon as we were in the room alone, he seated himself on the sofa, drew me to him, put his arm round me, and said quietly and tenderly—" It is, in a word, only a worldly affair, my Fanny ; a misfortune which I am persuaded thou wilt be able to bear as well as myself, if not indeed better. See here : read ~~it~~ thyself." And he laid in my hand a letter. It was from Peter, written in evident haste and agitation of mind. It contained the intelligence that the house of L—— and Co., in which Bear, on the advice of Peter, had placed his property, was become bankrupt, and to such a degree as gave no hope that the creditors would receive the smallest particle of a dividend. Peter's little savings were gone too. That which Bear with the labours of twenty years had gathered together was now in one moment lost for ever !

" My brother, my dearest brother," so Peter concluded his letter, " what I have lost is little, and I well deserved to lose it, because I was not more circumspect ; but thou—thou art unfortunate through me, and that fills me with despair. This is the bitterest feeling which in my life I ever experienced. If I were not chained here by the W—— lawsuit, I should fly to thee to throw myself into thy arms, and implore thy pardon." Several lines which followed were most indistinctly written. A spot on the paper, evidently caused by a tear, made the last word illegible. On this spot Bear rivetted his eyes. " My poor Peter !" said he, and now rolled forth great tears over his pale cheeks. He leaned his head against my bosom, and wept for a moment bitterly. I said nothing, but kissed his forehead, and let him feel that I understood him and felt with him. He became more composed,

and we soon began quite calmly to talk over this untoward occurrence and our own situation.

"I am now," said Bear, "on the same point on which I found myself twenty years ago. The prospect of a care-free old age is gone. I would not care for myself were I but alone."

"Bear!" I exclaimed, "wouldst thou be without me?"

"Not for the whole world," answered he; "but I wished that thou shouldst partake my prosperity and not my poverty."

"Joy and trouble, Bear! Vowed we not in the marriage hour to partake together joy and trouble? Ah! comprehend it then, man, that it is my pleasure to share thy trouble when it comes, and that there is no real trouble for me so long as thou lovest me as I love thee."

I must sketch no more of this conversation. Thou, Maria, wilt easily represent to thyself its continuance. Ah, it is indeed so natural, so easy, and so sweet, for a wife to let love and comfort stream forth on such occasions. Shame on them who could make a merit of it; enjoyment is its name. Such moments have their own great reward. People never love each other so intensely as then. Bear seemed, indeed, to feel it; he understood my devotion—understood that at his side neither courage nor joy could fail me. He was more affectionate to me than usual—he seemed grateful for my tenderness; but his brow did not clear itself, it was furrowed with a brooding anxiety; and with his hands behind him he paced the apartment to and fro, but not spitting; this custom he has entirely laid aside now. "Poor Peter!" sighed he at last, "I can understand what he suffers; and he cannot come. I wish I was able——"

"To go to him?" I suddenly added, guessing what it was which so oppressed him. "But how canst thou be absent from thy patients?"

"I have not many just now, and none which are seriously ill. Dr. D. would attend them in my absence. Them I could very well leave; but in this moment not—my wife."

"Oh, set off then, my Bear! the wife is not unreasonable. Set off, give Peter peace, and satisfy thy own heart. The wife will think of thee; will see after house and affairs.

Don't trouble thyself on that account ; she will not be uneasy or impatient ! she will maintain the honour of her husband."

Bear stretched out his arms to embrace me ; now first his brow cleared itself. Oh, the good man ! The suffering of his brother had oppressed him more than his own loss. So soon as the journey was determined on, he became quiet ; and till deep in the night we sate and talked over our affairs, and how he would settle our plans for the future. That the joy of my little feast dissolved itself in smoke, you may well imagine. For the first time since we were married was Bear unable to eat, and I could not even bear the idea of it. The duck remained untouched, but was secretly devoted by me to Bear's travelling provision-basket. Before we went to sleep our minds were again as full of peace and content as if no misfortune had fallen on our house ; and we closed this day, as we had done so many others, with thanks to the All-good for our happiness.

Yesterday Bear set out ; first to the city, where he must spend the greater part of the day. In the evening he would proceed further, and will remain away probably a fortnight. That is long. Thus left, I sit here and feel that my resolution by no means maintains the height to which it mounted in the first moments of our misfortune. But deep it shall not sink ; that I have resolved with myself. The change in our circumstances which goes most to my heart is that we must leave our little Rosenvik, and set ourselves down fixed and for ever in the city. Our means will not allow us any longer to have a country residence for the mere enjoyment's sake. In the depth of my own mind I propose again to teach music. Oh, fie upon the tear which here has fallen upon the paper ! there shall not be a second. I know, indeed, that all will succeed and succeed well, when one has courage in the soul and peace in the heart and the house. How miserable it would be of me to be in anxiety about the future, possessing as I do one of the best chances of life, my good and estimable husband !

Bear desired that our misfortune, for the present, should remain unknown in the neighbourhood. I will take care, therefore, to give nobody a suspicion of it. I will keep the promise I have given him, will be calm, and seek diversion in work. I have much to do in the garden. I will plant many

rose-bushes ; and if it be not allowed me to smell these roses, well then, they will at least rejoice the noses of others.

23rd, Evening.

I am quite refreshed by my garden labours. Serena has spent the whole day with me, and afforded me great assistance. We have made a strawberry bed, planted gooseberries and roses. I hope they will prosper ; and how refreshing is such employment ! But what has done me more good than the rest is, that Serena has opened to me all her heart—that good, loving, and pure heart. All is as I had suspected. Serena loves Bruno—Bruno, Serena. For the present, however, the connexion seems to be broken off ; but that it will continue so, that I do not believe. And yet, shall I desire a union between them ? Ah, I know not ! To-day Serena is pale ; one sees that she has suffered much. She is now getting ready our tea, and stands by the table, graceful as an angel, but sunk in thought, and with a sorrowful expression about the mouth. I have related to her the whole of that which I lately witnessed and passed through at Ramm ; and as I proceeded, I saw her become pale, redden, weep, suffer keenly, and then rise as it were into a radiant trance of rapture. She calls—"Tea is ready." "I come, dear creature." Good evening, dear Maria. I reckon to-night on a good, sound sleep. To-morrow I shall spend with Ma chère mère. Every day I go on writing a letter to Bear. It will be a mighty packet of important nothings.

Later.

I have had a fright, and I am yet full of the terror of it ! As Serena set out homewards, I accompanied her through the yard. The air had, for the lateness of the season, an un-wonted mildness,—and nature, in her autumnal, half-sorrowful beauty, lay peacefully around us, flushed with the clear evening rose. Serena, sensibly alive to the enjoyment of the hour, said, while we walked a few paces towards the garden, "Dost thou not believe, Fanny, that sometimes there lives in the air what one may pronounce goodness, and which immediately operates beneficially on the heart, from which we become ourselves good ?"

"Serena," I said, "thou exprestest my own very feeling ; but I must at the same time ask thee, whether thou hast not

discovered in raw autumn weather a proneness to become also harsh in mind?"

"O yes!" replied Serena, "but we must then seek for the vernal atmosphere of a higher region."

"But this is not always so easy; and perhaps for those who do not love is impossible."

"Yes," said she, "happy are they who have something to love on earth or in heaven. But who," added she, while her look became more earnest, and, as it were, inspired, "who needs be wholly destitute of this? Is not the world full of objects worthy of our love? Does it not rest with ourselves alone to open our souls to these? And now, Fanny"—and she looked around on the beautiful landscape—"are we not, even now, surrounded by living and love-worthy natures? Ah! it seems often to me, that voices proceed from trees and flowers, from stars and animals, which speak to me of the great and good Creator, and of the life which they have received from him. Everywhere a spirit meets me, which is like my own; which I can understand, and love; and where, and in what circumstance of life, breathe not such voices from the things and beings which surround us? There is only demanded of us an open ear."

"And a pure heart," rejoined I, embracing her. "Yes, then would the whole of human life become one continued conversation with God, and we should have neither bitterness nor ennui. But—"

"But I lose all recollection," said Serena, "while I talk with you. The carriage has long waited; I must go; adieu, dearest Fanny, adieu!"

Serena departed; and scarcely was she out of sight, when my gaze was suddenly struck with a pair of eyes whose expression was unlike that of Serena's. They glanced like two coals of fire out of the hedge of lilac, in which their owner appeared to be purposely concealed. I started, said to myself, "Lucifer!" and stared at the two burning gulphs. They were now fixed on me, and Hagar darted forth from the hedge. With a countenance which gave to the wild feeling a terrible expression, she stood before me, and in a vehement tone demanded—"Is it she, is it she, that he loves? Tell me, is it she?" I was about to answer her calmly, when in the same moment some one approached. Hagar stamped

furiously with her foot ; wrung passionately her hands, while she muttered between her teeth—" Woe ! woe to her and to me !" and was gone.

Horror-stricken and confounded, I entered the house ; saying to myself, " there is a difference between love and love ; there is a difference between whom, and how, and what—"

This scene has startled and quite unhinged me. Would to God that Bear was but at home !

CHAPTER XVII.

Rosenvik, September 28th.

THERE is something strange about Ma chère mère since the day that she returned to Carlsfors. She is no longer like herself ; she is singularly still, and, as it were, sunk in a dream. Her steps and her voice resound no longer through the spacious halls of Carlsfors. One hears no house-thunder, no words of reproof, any longer ; but at the same time, no proverbs, no fresh domestic joke and sport either. From that day she seems no longer to take interest in what is going forward. Inspector and book-keeper come to consult her on the concerns of the estate, and she refers them to Jean Jacques. The maids come to speak of their affairs, and she refers them to Tuttin. Tuttin comes to deliver her accounts, and to receive orders, and stays long, and lays many matters before her, but receives no answer. Ma chère mère appears at last to forget that she is in the room, and Tuttin, after she has coughed and wondered, has asked and waited, withdraws with a troubled mind, and still secretly charmed at the prospect of becoming the sole ruling and ordering power in the house, but presently stumbles on Jane Marie, who takes her by degrees under her tyranny. Even towards Bruno is Ma chère mère changed ; and when he is within, she sits silent, and looks at him fixedly. Yesterday as she sate thus, with her eyes directed towards him, I saw two large tears roll down her cheeks. They were the first which I have seen her shed since she had found her son again. What can be working in her mind ? What can this brooding and unwonted silence portend ? May no attack of hypochondria, or worse, impend ?

I am very uneasy. Bruno even fears somewhat evil. He took me aside yesterday, and asked in distress, what was the matter with his mother? I could give him no explanation, and Bear is absent; what shall we do without him? I have written and informed him of the state of things, here so that if it be possible he may hasten his return.

October 3rd.

I received yesterday a letter from Bear. In his letters he is still more laconic than in his conversation, but there is always a certain raciness about his words. I could draw from his letter, though it did not stand literally expressed there, that his arrival had given new life to Peter; and that his journey in various respects had been advantageous. Of Ebba he says, "she looks like a little bird, that when the darkness comes hides its head under its wing. It is well that Peter is now the wing." On the whole, Bear's letter was infinitely kind and satisfactory. He hoped by the sixth of October to be here. May he soon come; his presence is highly necessary. I become continually more uneasy about Ma chère mère. Some great change is to a certainty in progress in her, and now that I seriously fear for her, I feel more and more how very dear she is to me. For some days she has been yet stiller, yet more sunk in reverie, and seems to possess a certain inward quiet; but in all her movements, in all that she undertakes, prevails an uncertainty, a confusion, a want of tact and aptitude, so unlike her former firm and able manner. She is, moreover, so unwontedly mild and kind, that the servants of the household are astonished and affected by it. They look at one another, and seem to say, "What ails her?" So ask I also.

October 7th.

Ah! Maria, now I know all, and you shall learn all too. Bear came home the evening before last. I received him as if he had been the only human creature in the world, that is to say, besides myself. What he told me of his journey, of our affairs, of Ebba and Peter, I will relate to you another time: I can now only talk of that which occurred yesterday.

It was Sunday, and we went to dine at Carlsfors. Bear's eyes were fixed scrutinizingly on Ma chère mère, and his grimaces portended nothing good; that is, they all vanished,

which is a sign that his thoughts are serious and sorrowful. At table, Ma chère mère had Bear at her right hand, and Bruno at her left. She was still and brooding, but also extremely pale. Her bearing was not so proud, her toilet not so orderly as usual. It grieved me to see her. As the soup was removed, she poured out wine for Bruno; it ran in streams on the tablecloth, but she did not observe it. Bruno wished to take the bottle out of her hand, saying softly, "Dear mother, you pour the wine on the table."

"Do I?" said she, with a melancholy tone; "then I perceive that it is all over with me, my son. Pour out wine for thyself; thy mother will do it no more!" She set the bottle on the table, pushed her chair from her, and arose. We all arose too, with one common impulse. "Remain sitting," said Ma chère mère, with a strong and imperative voice: "remain sitting; no one may follow me."

She saluted us with the hand, and passed with slow and majestic steps through the wondering servants, but ran against the door, at which both Bear and Bruno sprang forward. She turned quickly and cried, "Whoever follows me is not my friend. Remain quietly here," she added, in a softer tone, "I will presently have you called."

We knew too well Ma chère mère's temperament to attempt to disregard her thus solemnly-pronounced will; but you cannot imagine the state of excitement and suspense in which we found ourselves. For more than an hour we continued in this painful expectation. I suffered deeply with Bruno's suffering. With darkly wrinkled brows he went agitatedly to and fro in the room, and from time to time wiped the perspiration from his forehead. At length came Elsa. The quiet servant was no more like herself. With perplexed look and faltering voice she requested us to come to Madame Mansfelt. Bruno sprang forward first; we followed him; and with internal trembling I expected to behold something horrible. But no; no fearful spectacle met us in Ma chère mère's chamber. She sate in the background in her easy-chair, upright and still, but with no general's mien, and only on the pale countenance, on the red and swollen eyelids, appeared the traces of a powerful but self-conquered agitation of mind.

"Are you all here?" inquired Ma chère mère with a firm

voice. We replied in the affirmative, at the same time gathering round her. "My children," began now Ma chère mère, with a strange mixture of strength and humility, "I wished to be alone for a moment, in order to prepare myself as becomes a Christian to appear before you, and to reveal to you my misfortune. Chagrin has now had its full dominion, it is time that reason should have its. My dear children, the hand of the Lord lies heavy on me; He has smitten my eyes with darkness."

A smothered expression of grief was heard, and its echo spread itself around. I seized Bear's hand, and saw in his countenance that he had already suspected the real matter.

"My dear children," began Ma chère mère again, "you must not distress yourselves about me. I myself grieve no longer. At first, I acknowledge that it went hard with me; and for a long time I would not believe that it could be so with me as it now is. No; I would not concede to it; I resisted the idea of it; I murmured in myself; I was like the old woman against the stream. But it became continually darker and darker; the calamity became more certain; to-day it became perfectly clear; and now—I have humbled myself. Ah! my children, let us, in the first place, reflect that it is in vain to strive with our Lord God; when we throw little stones at Him, He throws back again great ones at us. In the second, that we are shortsighted mortals, and know but little what is best for us and for others; and on that account, my children, it is good for us to bow ourselves beneath the hand of our Lord God, and to be obedient to Him, for He knows well what He does."

I could stand quietly no longer. I threw myself with tears in my eyes on the neck of Ma chère mère, exclaiming—"Bear will help Ma chère mère; he will restore her sight again to her!"

"I hope really to be able to do it," said Bear, drawing near; and as he seized her hand looked keenly at her. "It is the cataract. It can be cured. In two or three years it will probably be matured, and then an operation can be performed."

"Lars Anders," said Ma chère mère, while she pressed his hand, "I believe you, and in this faith I live happily. I will wait patiently till the day comes when I may again behold

the Lord's sun ; and should it never come for me on the earth, I will yet sit in my darkness in resignation. I have formerly sate in a deeper darkness ; I am now in comparison happy. My eyes have been permitted to see the fulness of a great joy ; and if I indeed cannot see, I can yet hear my son, and —you all," added she, as fearing to do us an injustice.

Bruno stood leaning over his mother ; his head was bowed down to hers ; she felt his breath on her forehead. "Is that thou, my son?" asked she tenderly, and lifted somewhat her darkened eyes.

"Yes, my mother," answered he, in a voice melodious and full of emotion.

"Give me then thy arm, my son, and conduct me into the drawing-room," said Ma chère mère. "And you all, my children, follow me. Bruno will play us one of his beautiful pieces, and we will all be as we were before. Comply with my wish in this, my children, and do not let my misfortune trouble you ; don't imagine that it is necessary to compassionate me. No one shall have more trouble than formerly to wait on and be helpful to me. I shall soon be able to help myself ; and should I need sometimes the hand or the eye of another, I will ask for it, and am quite certain that I shall have it. For the rest, we will trouble ourselves as little as possible about this occurrence. 'It is old wife's comfort,' said our great Gustavus Adolphus, 'to grieve and complain ;' and I say it becomes every sensible person to trust in God, and patiently to bear the cross laid upon him."

With this she arose, gave her arm to Bruno, but he put his arm round her, while he pressed with inexpressible tenderness her hand to his lips, and so conducted her out of the room. A faint red on this flushed Ma chère mère's pale cheeks, and with a smile which one might style that of happiness, she leaned her head against his shoulder. So they went on, and we followed.

Bruno played as his mother had desired, and played divinely. I have never yet heard any one draw such tones out of an instrument. "He plays not like an angel, but an archangel," said Ma chère mère. But as he descended to gloomier notes, "Dear son!" said she, "play something more lively ; that is quite woe-begone." Like the celebrated

Queen Elizabeth, Ma chère mère loves, properly speaking, only gladsome and stormy music.

After the music, arose a general conversation. We drew in a ring round Ma chère mère, spite of her prohibition, and every one did his best to amuse and entertain her, and never have I witnessed so spirited and animated a party ; even Ma chère mère was more lively and elated than I had ever seen her. Bruno shone in interesting and finely-related stories. Ma chère mère sometimes screamed quite aloud—now from terror, now from astonishment and delight ; and I must confess that I did the same. Wonderful, incomprehensible, interesting Bruno ! Afternoon and evening flew by in such discourse ; everybody was amazed when supper was announced ; and Ma chère mère said as she arose, “ My dear children, you are this evening so excessively merry and interesting, that I could sit up all night and listen to you ; but ‘ he that eats out of the iron pot will have nothing in the dish,’ and we must no more indulge to excess in pleasures than in other things. I have not been very well to-day, and shall do the wisest to get to bed. I thank you all, my children, for a happy evening, and wish you a blessing on your supper, and a good night.”

Bruno conducted his mother to her chamber, and stayed some time with her. When he returned, he was still, sorrowful, but mild. After supper he talked long with Bear respecting the cataract, and inquired very exactly concerning the nature and development of it, and the operation upon it ; all which the good doctor described *con amore*. Bear regards it as probable that it has originated in her violent agitation of mind on the discovery of her son ; but of that Bruno must suspect nothing. It is singular that this mother and this son seem conducted by fate to occasion mischief to each other ; but now, since the blindness has shown itself, the conflict will probably cease, and the angel of reconciliation, which has descended into their souls, spread its wings over their future life. But how will it be in this future with Ma chère mère ? Will her strength of mind be able to maintain itself ? Will her physical strength not sink ? What will she do—in what employ herself ? She who has been so commanding, so restless, will she not become oppressed by inactivity ? Will she not become splenetic, quar-

relishsome, peevish, a plague to herself and others?—“Tell me, Bear, what thou thinkest about it?”—“Hum! we shall see.”

9th.

We are endeavouring to bring our affairs into order; but it is more difficult than we at first imagined. Heavy debts will oppress us; Bear's benevolence towards poor relations on his mother's side now falls with a heavy burden upon him. Many retrenchments must be made in our housekeeping; and yet I can see well that we shall enter the winter with a complete destitution of money. But Bear is strong and kind, and as soon as we get into the city I will give music-lessons. We shall remove thither very soon. Bear has taken a little house of three rooms and a kitchen. It grieves me now to leave Ma chère mère. Since our last being together, she has not been well. I have toothache, and my heart is heavy. There come times in which all is so tedious. But we must not then forget that we have had enjoyment—that we have been happy. I will not do it, and I will not make my life bitter by too much impatience. Heaviness I hate as cordially as even Miss Hellevi Husgafvel does; but I now feel that there are difficulties, burdens, of which one cannot get rid; and we must therefore do our best to bear them lightly.

14th.

Long life to Ma chère mère! No one ever can show himself more reasonable under misfortune than she does. No one can with more dignity bow beneath the hand of the Lord. She has transferred the whole of the out-door management to Jean Jacques, of the domestic to Jane Marie, and only reserved the right to be consulted on certain occasions. At the carrying out of this arrangement she made a great and formal oration to the servants and dependents. Tuttin has given warning to leave next spring. She and Jane Marie are not the best friends. Ma chère mère has further written to the B—— Institution in Stockholm, for a person who shall instruct her how to employ herself with different things in her blindness; as, for instance, in writing, card-playing, etc. In the mean time she works diligently at her great net, and plays with great zeal on her violin. In temper she is quiet, kind, and very cheerful. I must also say that so far

Jane Marie conducts herself admirably towards her; and in the evenings, with self-denial which is meritorious, plays all the sonata from Steibelt and Pleyel "avec accompagnement de violon," which Ma chère mère can play by rote on her violin. Ma chère mère also shows herself more cordial towards Jane Marie, which appears to be felt with a good effect by her. Bruno is every day at Carlsfors. Ma chère mère already knows the sound of his horse's feet; her face flushes when she hears it, and she says—"Now he comes!" When he is with her there prevails something more womanly and amiable than usual in her disposition. Bruno is going to purchase Ramm, and settle there.

15th.

We made to-day various payments which took all our money. I believed that we had not a single penny left, but I discovered that we still possessed a twelve-shilling piece, and I rejoiced so much over it that I was obliged actually to laugh at myself; then I wept; and after that laughed again, and embraced my Bear. The day after to-morrow we remove into the city. I think with delight that I shall then see Serena, and the excellent old Dahls. Besides this, we will make no acquaintance at all, but will live quietly and to ourselves. The winter will soon pass over—but in the spring!—ah! in the spring, when all is lovely in the country, when the air and flowers, butterflies and the song of birds—no, I will not make myself sad; I really will not. I will have flowers in my room, and I will myself be butterfly, both for them and for my Bear.

CHAPTER XVIII.

W—, October 20th.

WE have been in the city three days. We left Rosenvik on Monday morning; not without tears on my part, I confess it; but I took care not to let Bear see them. Ah! I shall never again call the dearest of little places mine! The morning was grey and raw; snow flew in the air; the road was rough with the night frost. Polle, the poor horse, drew Bear and his Bearess heavily along. We breakfasted at Bird's Nest, whither Miss Hellevi Husgafvel had pressingly

invited us. Her excellent coffee, with the accompanying dainties, her lovely museum, and a cheerful gossip, revived me ; and I arrived in the city in good spirits.

Our three rooms are neat and comfortable, but do not lie on the sunny side, which I regret. Farewell, my flowers ! Well, we can live without them. I have during three days rummaged about greatly. Yesterday I put up curtains myself in our apartments. Serena was here, and helped me. How interesting the conversation over this was you can imagine. "My angel, give me that piece of muslin."—"Have you the scissors ?"—"Where is the needle-case ?"—"Here!"—"The hammer ?"—"There!"—"Does the valance hang crooked ?"—"A little, to the left."—"This nail is blunted."—"Here, here is another ;" and so on. And there was some joke, some laughter. With Serena work becomes pleasure ; she does all easily and well. Towards noon we had all in order, and when Bear came home I led him with some pride into his room, which he had never before seen so adorned. "Ah ! the d—l !" he exclaimed, gaping and grimacing with all his might.

Serena dined with us. She was merry, and joked with Bear. The dinner was good ; it was a pleasant little meal. When Serena, after dinner, had left us, Bear fell into a sort of ecstasy over her, and exclaimed, "She is an actual angel !"

"Yes, Bear ; and on that account she would be not in the least suitable as a wife for thee."

"Not in the least ; even as little as I am fit for a husband for her. For me there is only one that is suitable, and that is——my wife."

"Well, that is indeed admirable, and as it ought to be !"

All is now in order in my little house ; had I only a little sun. But, thank God, I have the best sunshine of the house. I have peace !

November 1st.

Our misfortune is now everywhere known. Do you know how we first became aware of this ? By Bruno coming one morning to Bear, and putting half of his property at his command. It troubled him that Bear would receive nothing except the loan of a certain sum, and that to liquidate a debt which now pressed upon him. The worthy old Dahl also came to Bear, and offered him his services. All our acquaint-

ances have shown us much kindness and sympathy ; many of the families which employ Bear as a physician, have immediately sent in their annual payment. By all this our present cares are swept away, and I am charmed with the goodness of men.

But no kindness, no visit, has yet affected me so much as that of Ma chère mère. She came yesterday afternoon, so friendly and cordial. She caused me to conduct her through the rooms, into the kitchen and store-chamber; made me describe all my arrangements, and lamented only that she could not see my curtains, "which report said were so especially tasteful." To the loss we had suffered she made no allusion ; but after tea she said suddenly in a scolding tone, "Listen, Lars Anders : what stupid nonsense is this of which people talk ? They say you are intending to leave Rosenvik ! That I forbid ; and if for some years you cannot afford to pay the rent, you shall have it rent-free ; the devil fetch me, that shall you ! I will hear no word against it ; it is now said and determined."

Bear, with his horrible independence, resolved to say much against it ; but I was so transported with Ma chère mère's words, that in an instant I kissed her cheek, and hands, and dress. This weakened Bear's resistance ; so that he merely muttered, "Too much ! we cannot accept what we cannot make a return for." But Ma chère mère interrupted him warmly, and said, while she held me on her knee,

"Good Lars Anders, don't stand there and mutter like a beetle in a tub. Too little, and too much, spoils all. To be independent, and a churl to boot, that's all very well ; but to be unwilling to accept a service from a friend is pride, and does no good. You have had a loss ;—that was no fault of yours. Well then, you need not be ashamed of it. Be willing to concede a little, Lars Anders, and adapt yourself to circumstances. Every one must do that, sooner or later : to-day me ; to-morrow thee ;—but that which is offered from the heart must not be rejected. Besides this, if I offer you a service, my friends, I offer myself one at the same time ; for I like to have you for neighbours—there are none that I like so well. It stands as I have said. Hold Rosenvik for five years rent-free ; afterwards you may pay me as you have done before. Better times will soon come for you, my chil-

dren, for you are diligent and careful; and after storm and rain, God causes his sun to shine. Don't be headstrong, Lars Anders. Be a kind man. Look at your wife; she is far more sensible than you. Come now, and kiss my hand, and let us be friends." And she extended her hand to Bear, who, half grumbling and half thankful and tender, kissed it and shook it. The affair was settled; was no further spoken of; and Ma chère mère drove away kind and glad, as she came.

I was so perfectly happy to have my Rosenvik again, and there to enjoy the spring, with its flowers and birds, that Bear could no longer hold out with his stubborn love of independence, but became happy with me. So then there shall I again smell my roses, gather my gooseberries, eat my cauliflowers, and cultivate my garden. All that is divine!

November 14th.

For these ten days I have given music-lessons. Serena, to whom I confided my position, has procured me four pupils. They come in the forenoon, while Bear is absent; he knows nothing of it, and will in time wonder how it is that the housekeeping goes on so well, and yet how little the money in the box diminishes. It is a pleasure to do this for a man who is so kind, and requires so little: in opposite circumstances it would be a pain. The music-lessons go forward—what indeed does not when one determines it shall?—but agreeable they certainly are not. Three of my scholars are very slow in their conceptions, and have been badly taught hitherto. I do all that is possible to inspire them. We thrash through the "Bataille de Prague" with labour and pain. The fourth pupil is a clever girl, and gives me pleasure.

With the old Dahls I come continually into a more confidential relation; in Serena I have the best and most amiable of friends; Bear is so kind. Ah! I have much good for which I ought to be thankful, and yet I am heavy at heart; there hangs a cloud on me which will not disperse. I am not very well either; it is so dark here in the city; for several weeks there has been a perpetual fog, converted only now and then into rain; and then, I have certain thoughts, which—

I should like to know what Ma chère mère would say to this voice of lamentation; probably—"They who wish to sing

always find a song." Ma chère mère plays on her violin, and is cheerful in her misfortune. Would that I were but only half as rational as she !

CHAPTER XIX.

W—, November 17th.

WE have now been a month in the city. This fog, this gloomy season, oppresses the spirits, and then the everlasting dirty weather ; one cannot get a mouthful of fresh air ; everybody has, moreover, colds and affections of the chest ; and Bear is so busy that I cannot get a sight of him, except at dinner and late in the evening. The old Dahl has got a fit of the gout, and Serena cannot leave him. I do not feel well enough to go out often, and therefore I can see very little of her. I endeavour to employ myself busily at home, but that does not succeed ; I have just been trying to enliven myself with the beautiful "Song of the Sun," but I had no voice. Then I thought I would write a little poem, but could find no rhyme to "heart," except "smart," and that put me into a weeping mood ; then I set myself to sew away right or wrong, but the work turned out neither right nor wrong. At last I placed myself at the window, in order, amidst the grinding noise of wagons and the patterning of the eaves-drops, to relate to you my bad humours. My little pupils also oppress me. We get by no possibility forward with the "Bataille de Prague ;" we must try something else. Say, do you know anything more wearying than the eternal dropping of the eaves ?

19th.

I wished yesterday to see Serena ; I needed her friendly countenance, for I was out of humour with many things, and especially with myself. My pupils had in the forenoon so tried me that I wept as soon as I was alone. At dinner the soup was smoked ; Bear was obliged to leave me the moment dinner was over ; everything appeared insupportable ; and in order to drive away the bad humour, I set off under the umbrella, and through the mud to the Dahls. I found them alone. The little family was assembled in the sick-chamber of the old gentleman. He sate in a great arm-chair, his foot

wrapped in flannel. Serena's look and friendliness would have enlivened me, had not her paleness frightened me, and made me suspect that all was not right here. Mr. and Madame Dahl were also unusually still and serious; yet I saw clearly that the relation between the old people and their darling was as entire and cordial as ever.

After tea, Madame Dahl went into her own room, and asked me to accompany her, as Serena would read aloud to her grandpapa, who was not disposed this evening for much talk. When we were alone together, neither would any conversation move on properly between us; the good old lady was sunk in thought, and sighed deeply. I inquired tenderly into the cause, and soon learned it:—Bruno, a few days ago, had sought the hand of Serena from her grandparents.

"His proposal made me sorry," continued Madame Dahl, "as he at once brought forward the matter in so warm and manly a manner; for I have always been much concerned for Bruno, and yet we could not from many causes think of Bruno as the husband of Serena, at least not yet, while we know so little of him. There were strange reports about him in his youth, and respecting the occasion of his flight from his mother's house. One has for many years heard nothing of him; and even now he is ambiguously spoken of, especially as regards a certain woman that he has in his house. My husband is strict in his demands of honour and of pure reputation in a man, and if any one has a right to require these, it is certainly he. He has, as well as myself, a great esteem for Bruno, and rejoices sincerely over the good that he intends and will effect here; but he does not wish to call him son. Serena is the apple of his eye—his pride, his joy—therefore it is not at all to be wondered at, that he will not give her to a man whose life and character are covered with darkness. He therefore received Bruno's proposal coldly; and without absolutely rejecting it, begged him at present to think nothing further of it; spoke of the future, of nearer acquaintance, and so on; and in order to bring the not very pleasant conversation to a friendly termination, added sportively—"And for the rest—when we read in the Bible that Jacob served seven years, and again seven, for Rachel, we cannot think it unreasonable to wait a few years to deserve a damsel who certainly is better and handsomer than the

young shepherdess in the land of Mesopotamia.' But this joke about Jacob and Rachel did not seem at all to please Bruno. He took his hat with a dark glance, bowed, and left us without a word.

"When he was gone, we felt it our bounden duty to make all that had passed known to Serena, and to hear what she would say. We did so, and her deep agitation of mind strengthened what I had suspected, and what she herself cordially confessed in reply to our questions;—Serena loves Bruno. Already as a child she conceived a fondness for him, and this is now become love. But as my husband laid before Serena the reasons which had induced him to give Bruno an answer so little encouraging, she confessed, even in the midst of her tears, that he had done quite right. And as he added, with emotion, that his grey hairs would go down with sorrow to the grave if she united herself to a man who was unworthy of her, and that even now he could have no peace if Serena were so bound by her affections that she could not feel herself happy unless in marriage with him, she threw her arms round his neck, and begged him to make himself easy; assuring us that she loved us more than she did Bruno, and never would dispose of her hand without our full consent; that she would always remain with us; and said such affectionate things to us,—how contented she was with her condition, how happy our tenderness made her, and so on, that our hearts became much lighter.

"Since then we have said no more of the affair; but God knows how it is, we are all somewhat out of tune. I look at Serena, and see that her heart is heavy, though she shows herself always so kindly towards us. My husband put a restraint on himself in the interview of that day, and the gout has through that become worse. Of Bruno, too, who before was here so frequently, nobody has heard a word; perhaps he has taken the refusal so ill that he will set off again to the West Indies."

"Then let him go," said I; "then he is not worthy of Serena. In truth, I must say with Mr. Dahl, that she is a maiden who deserves to be served for and waited for; but methinks that seven years, and again seven years, may be a little too much in these days, when men do not live half as long as the patriarchs."

Madame Dahl laughed and said, " You have always a lively word, my little Fransiska. Ah! well, I myself have thought so too, and said so ; but my husband, in everything so wise and excellent, is somewhat obstinate in matters of marriage ; and, beyond this, it by no means pleases him when any one asks the hand of Serena. Ah, Fransiska ! I have often thought and suspected that in our tenderness of Serena we probably mingle no little selfishness, and that we perhaps are as much afraid of losing by her marriage her careful attentions and society, as that she should not be happy in her wedded life. I have had some trouble," added she with a sigh, " to make this right clear to myself. Ah ! life is a conflict to the grave. The old have probably as great, and even still more powerful temptations to withstand than the young. The blood is so sluggish, the feelings become so numb ; the cold which creeps into the body will insinuate itself into the soul. We feel that we need much help, and begin to make demands on others ; we have many little complaints, and through them we too easily forget to sympathise in the sufferings and enjoyments of others. In fact, these are heavy temptations, and had we not the Gospel, I feel persuaded that we must sink ; and probably we suffer ourselves to become more fettered than we are aware of."

During our conversation the clock had struck nine. Madame Dahl and I ate a light supper ; Serena remained with her grandfather. After supper we went to him also, in order to attend the evening prayers, which for fifty years have been held every evening in the house. As I approached the door, I heard Serena reading aloud. " Heavens !" thought I, " she surely cannot have been reading aloud the whole time since we left them." We entered ; the reading ceased ; the servants assembled in the room, and the old Dahl read with dignity and devotion the short but beautiful Evening Prayer. As this ended, the inmates and servants of the house gave each other the hand, with a friendly " Good night." The whole was a peaceful scene, which did the heart good.

When we were again alone, I observed that Serena looked weary. She coughed sometimes, and the cough did not at all please me ; but as I looked at her with an inquisitive uneasiness, she smiled at me so kindly and cheerfully, as if

she would remove from me this impression. When I was taking leave, and wished the old Dahl a good night's sleep, he said, "Sleep has not been for some time my friend; but I am happy enough to have a little Scheherazade by my couch, who shortens a part of the night for me through her pleasant histories; and that has she done for probably more than 'a thousand and one nights.' But perhaps thou art tired tonight, my good maiden," added he, as he looked at Serena.

"O, I can very well read a little longer," she replied zealously.

I was about to put in my opposition, by a remark on the weariness of Serena's look; but at my first "But," Serena laid her hand instantly on mine, so pressingly, so forbiddingly, that I closed my mouth again. When she accompanied me out, "Serena," said I, in a tone of reproof, "why didst thou not tell thy grandfather the truth? Thou art weary; —I see it. Dost thou think that he can be satisfied that to entertain him thou shouldst read thyself to death? This is wrong; it is unreasonable."

"Hush! hush! thou very reasonable creature!" said Serena smiling, and caressing me, while a tear gleamed in her eye. "Let me to-day follow my understanding; another time I will follow thine. Grandfather is not well, and to-day he is extremely out of spirits; and if he imagined that I was not well, he would be very uneasy. I am not at all unwell; I am only a little tired; I shall be all right again presently, like a winter moon."

"Then thou must very soon call on me, for my spirits have been for some time regularly declining."

"Ah! I suspected so. What is it, Fanny? My dear Fanny, what is it that oppresses thee so? Sit down; let me take off your boa. Let me know, now——"

"No, no, Serena, not now! But come soon to me, Serena."

"As soon as ever it is possible to me."

Dahls' servant accompanied me home with a lantern. It rained, and heavy as the rain-drops fell my thoughts. "Shall Serena"—so they ran—"wither in her youth, because she has endeared herself to the old people, and has made herself so indispensable to them? I wish that she was carried off!—otherwise she will be utterly bewitched with this reading. Bruno would be just the man for such an exploit—but Bruno

—this unquiet and not pure spirit—could he make her happy ? Would not this be to fall out of the ashes into the fire ? My poor, dear Serena ! Like the water-lily thou seemest destined, now to float on still, and now on stormy waves, and only to live as the ornament or the prey of them.”

22nd.

Yet the water-lily has its own root, although this lies hidden in the deep ; and although its blossoms allow themselves to be rocked by the waves, yet it has its own firm eye-mark—Heaven ! And now from the blossom of the water to the blossom of the valley—to Serena. To-day in the cold dark morning she surprised me, and I confess it—surprised me in tears. I was ashamed of myself ; and to her affectionate caresses and questions, could only say—“ Don’t trouble thyself about me, Serena ! I am to-day rather weak. Thou shouldst have come another day ; to-day I am stupidly childish.”

“ No, to-day is the right day,” replied Serena, with zealous cordiality. “ It is exactly to-day that it pleases me to be here. I have had no rest since I saw thee last. Thou spakest so sorrowfully, so unlike thyself. And now I am here, and shall not go away till thou hast told me what it is that lies so heavy on thy mind.”

“ Guard thyself from reprisals, Serena !”

“ Ah ! thou art ready to do battle, I hear. Well, that makes me easier. See, thou laughest ! God be praised, now all will go well ! But tell me, dear Fanny, tell me——”

We got into the great easy-chair together ; we gossiped, we wept, we laughed together, and Serena’s tenderness and sensible words lightened my heart materially. But as I began to be more composed in myself, I began also to make assault upon her, and said—“ Now comes the turn to thee, Serena ! Now must thou also confess. No, no, thou canst not creep out ; thou shalt not leave me till thou hast explained this riddle. Thou comest to-day to me ; speakest with me, of me, as if there was nothing else in the world besides to talk of. Thou hast something in thy look which seems to say that eternal peace dwells in thy soul. Tell me, can it be so ? I know that Bruno has asked thy hand. I

know too, that if it has not been actually refused him, it has been shown to him in that distant and doubtful perspective which makes it very unlikely that he will obtain it. I know too, that this has wounded him deeply,—can all this be indifferent to thee?"

"No,—not indifferent!" It seemed to be painful to Serena to speak on this subject.

"Dearest Serena!" I exclaimed, "pardon me, I see that I tease thee, but this time thou must let me see into thy heart. I know that Bruno loves thee extremely; thou, thyself, hast confessed what thou feelest for him; canst thou renounce him without pain?"

"No, not without pain,—but yet without much suffering."

"Dost thou not deceive thyself? Thou sayest now—'I do not suffer,' and art yet so pale. Thou wilt die one day while thou art saying—'I do not die!'"

Serena smiled sorrowfully, while she blushed, and said: "No, Fanny! of this trouble I shall not die. I have proved myself, and I know that I can bear it. In a while I shall be no longer pale; I shall become again quite composed and strong. My parents have explained to me the reasons which have influenced them not to comply with Bruno's wishes; and I see that they are right, and that they cannot possibly think otherwise. On that account I have compelled my own inclinations to silence; yes, I have laid aside all thoughts of a union with Bruno. I will live only for my parents. So long as they love me, and through my attentions are rendered happy, I cannot feel unhappy myself."

"Is, then, thy sense of duty so strong, is thy tenderness for them so sufficing for thy own heart; is it able to drown every wish, every bitter yearning, which, if thou lovest, thou must still feel?"

"Yes, if not indeed always, yet is it so on the whole. Seest thou, Fanny, in the daytime there may come some impatience, some yearning, some 'Ah!' as thou callest it, and disquieten the heart; but when the day is over, and I can retire to rest, and say to myself that those who tenderly cherished my childhood have during the day enjoyed comfort and pleasure through me, and think that they now rest in

peace and bless their child ;—then, Fanny, it becomes all so quiet, so well about my heart, that I silence any ‘ Ah !’ and am contented and grateful for my lot.”

“ If thy parents yet live ten or twenty years ? Every year they will require more indispensably thy care,—and then this reading—Serena, thou wilt wither away before thy time, and become old in thy best years !”

“ And if the cheeks wrinkle, and the eyes grow dim, what then, dear Fanny, if we have but won the satisfaction of the heart ? I have reflected on the future, of which thou speakest, and fear it not. If parents are not kind and worthy of respect, it may be hard, very hard, to live entirely for them ; and this may with truth be styled a sacrifice. But how different is it in this case for me ; and how many charms has my life which nobody is aware of. Do I express a wish which my parents do not hasten to satisfy ? How many great pleasures do not their kindness and generosity confer on me ? In fact, to live for such kind and venerable parents is a beautiful and noble lot.”

“ Thou speakest right well and eloquently, Serena,” said I, somewhat piqued ; “ and no one can admire thy parents more than I do ; but I cannot away with it that they can never endure thy suitors ; that they always oppose themselves to thy marrying ; and I would ask whether a good portion of selfishness does not lie in that. They will not give thee to any other because they will keep thee for themselves, that thou mayst nurse them, read to them, and sing to them, till——”

“ Fransiska !” interrupted me Serena with an expression of terror, “ say not so. Are they not such thoughts which awaken bitterness in the heart, and cripple all our power to do good. My dear Fanny, these ideas must, with all our might, be banished as evil tempters. For the rest,—if parents will have some return for all that they have sacrificed ; if they will not be forsaken in their old age, and will retain near them the child they have cherished and brought up, is that anything to wonder at—is it anything but reasonable ? Ah, I would appeal to all whose situation resembles mine, and say, ‘ Let us remember this, and love the fulfilment of our filial duty.’ ”

“ And when these duties cease ; when thy parents are gone

and gone, too, the best portion of thy existence, will not lie appear empty to thee? Thou hast for their sakes separated thyself from thy young companions, and their interests; thou hast gone out of the joyful and stirring track of life, in order to accompany the dying, and to smoothen his course; and now standest thou suddenly in solitude. Will not thy soul also have become a nun, which sees in the world a desert, and returns mute into its chill cloister?"

"I do not believe it," said Serena, as she looked up. A tear glittered in her eye; her bosom rose, as though it would fling from it a weight; and she continued: "Life is rich and beautiful. God's goodness is inexhaustible; why then should our hearts cease to receive it? Why should they wither away so long as there flow rich wells of enjoyment? If they do, it must be their own fault. They contract themselves; they close themselves; they will not expand in order to rejoice in the joy of others, to admire the beauty of the world. Ah! that is poverty of soul. My dear Fanny, I desire it not. I will keep my soul open; spring, and friendship, and song, live perpetually on the earth. Heavy and woful times may come, but they must go again; and even while they last, shall we no longer look at the sunshine which falls on our lives, as on that which is turned away from it? And exactly on this account, best Fanny, lest us say no more of that which oppresses me. Let me now enjoy the sun which greets us after so many gloomy days. See how beautifully it lies on the green table-cover." And she laid her fair hand in the sunshine, as if caressing it. "Let us now be happy on thy account, and since I see that thou lovest me as I do thee." And with silent tears on her glowing countenance, Serena embraced me, and leaned her head against my shoulder.

"But Bruno, Serena? But Bruno?" I was like the devil; I would let her have no rest. "Whilst thou consolest thyself and enjoyest life, he who does not possess thy fortitude will be solitary and miserable."

Scarcely had I pronounced these words, when I repented them. The happy glow which illumined Serena's brow was suddenly extinguished; a cloud, a trouble, passed over it; but she collected herself, and said with a quiet sincerity, "No, Fanny, no. Bruno will not be unhappy. No, he also will acquire peace."

"And how And whence is this certainty?" demanded I, in astonishment.

"Ah! I know how it will come to pass . . . I have a presentiment, a faith which cannot deceive me. Seest thou, there will pass over a time; it will not be joyful, but it will pass over, and then Bruno will come again. Then it will be as in my childhood, and in my first youth;—we shall be as brother and sister; and this bond will make us both happy. Bruno will choose himself another wife, but I shall always remain his friend, his sister. Thou shalt see that it will be so. My parents, Bruno, and thee,—to love and to live for you,—O Fanny! how good is God!"

The bears on Spitzbergen did not fall with such fury on the huts of the sailors, as my Bear now on the hall door. It was noon, and Serena was obliged to hasten away home. I was absent during dinner, and had to endure Bear's raillyery on that account; in order to reconcile him, I ordered a super-excellent cup of coffee, and while he drank it, I sate down to play an air to the poem which I had composed during dinner, and which I now send you.

THE WATER-LILY.

From the clear water springeth
A white and lovely flower,
Beholds the sun, and bringeth
Its homage to his power.

At once its eye it turneth
Aloft in truth and love;
An offering pure it burneth,
To its high God above.

Over the deeps it hovers,
Like angels' prayers so sweet;
No restless wish discovers—
Love is its bliss complete.

When howl the tempests chilly,
And heavy drench the rains,
Still calmly waves the lily
Upon the billowy plains.

Nor from the station flieth
Where God its head did raise;
Heaven patiently it eyeth,
And hopes for better days.

Away the storms are winging;
The purple evening round
Sheds pearls; and softly ringing
The harps of ocean sound.

In the sea's silver dwelling,
The Neck his song doth raise
Unto the lily, telling
Of love which ne'er decays.

" Come, and behold all wonder,
Which fills the deep, deep sea;
In meads of rose far under,
I'll sing alone to thee.

" Come down to the woodlands dreamy,
To the house with its pearly dome;
Come with sun-rays beamy,
Love calls thee to thy home."

But the snow-pure lily, throwing
Its glance to heaven high,
In the world of light yet glowing,
Gives the singer this reply.

" He who for my love pineth,
Must haste aloft to me;
Alone where God's sun shineth,
Can I belong to thee.

" Come, Poet-Prince of Ocean,
Here all is warm and bright,
View heaven with deep devotion
And sing of love and light."

The dream is flown! The Necken
Sinks down to deepest gloom;
Him joy no more shall waken,
But hopeless love consume.

The same! and ever the same! makes life wearisome, especially when this monotony consists of everlasting foggy and dirty weather. Nothing prospers in this atmosphere except illness. I see Bear scarcely an hour per day; and yet his friendly look is as necessary for me as the sun. He is now in the highest degree uneasy on account of one of his patients, the esteemed father of a family, and will watch tonight by him. How different can life appear at different times! At times so sportive, or clear and—— There fell

a poor woman in the street and spoiled her cloak ; there the wind turns a gentleman's umbrella inside out. There was a damsel covered with mud by a chaise hurrying past. All three looked quite wretched. The little sparrows twitter : **I wish I was a sparrow !**

28th.

Bear is full of trouble. The father of the family is dead. He was a man in his best years, and has left behind him a widow with seven children, of whom the greater number are small. Their only means of support was the earnings of the father. They are but recently come hither, and have neither relations nor acquaintance who can help them. The poor little things ! it cuts me to the heart when I think of them.

“Hast thou nothing black that might serve for mourning for those little ones ?”

“God help us, Bear ! to me everything looks black ! even this red cloth here. Thou sayest Serena was there. How did she look ?”

“Friendly and kind as an angel of comfort.”

“Good Serena !”

Bruno ; one hears nothing of him. Perhaps his wretched pride is so thoroughly wounded that he gives up all thoughts of Serena. If he do, he will fall in my esteem. And Serena ? Is she really as strong as she would represent ? Will not this love, this pain, gnaw at her life like a concealed worm ? Everything seems to me sorrowful. I see Serena grow pale ; Bruno grow gloomy ; I think on the fatherless children, who need food and comfort ; Ma chère mère sits in darkness ; Bear is distressed, and I——

Ah ! so many things in this life give us only a glimpse of themselves, but come no further ; so many a day dawns, but never becomes clear ; so many things are begun, but are never ended ; so that contemplating this, one should be ready to let one's hands fall into utter discouragement, if it were not for the consoling thought, “This is but the Beginning !”

CHAPTER XX.

W—, December 4th

You tell me, Maria, that I appear no longer like myself. You find something so desponding and sad in my letters; you inquire what is the cause. I cannot resist your soft and affectionate words, and will tell you all, though you should find me very strange and childish.

It is true that I have for some time taken a very discouraging view of life. I have not found myself well in either mind or body, and felt no pleasure in existence. Ah, Maria! I feel that I am a mother, and this feeling oppresses me. It has awakened a world of strange and anxious thoughts. I have looked forth as with a newly acquired sense into the world, and I have discovered there a thousand dangers and sufferings upon which I had never before reflected, and which all seem to threaten my child. Every step in life seems to be encompassed with snares and misfortunes. To learn to walk, to read, to think, to accommodate itself to the circumstances of life,—how hard, how wearisome! And then all the troubles, from the first pains of teething to the last pains of death! all dangers of body and soul; falls down steps, into love, and sin, etc.; how fearfully, how sorrowfully have these shapes of night started up in my soul: and I could not say to them, "Avaunt, deceitful phantoms!" because I looked around in life and saw that they are actually the daily guests in the dwellings of men. And as I became sensible of this, and the heaven looked down upon me so gloomy and cloudy, then, Maria, I trembled that my child should see the light, and yearned to hide it from the world and from suffering.

In part I have been happy enough to overcome these sickly and painful feelings; but the worst of all, and that which oppresses me unceasingly, is, that I fear my child will not be welcome to my husband. I fancy that I can perceive it by many signs. He never speaks of children; never expresses a wish for them; and once, when the conversation was of some one who had a great family, he threw a quick glance on me, as if to say, "Thou really wilt not have such an one?" Ah, Maria, and immediately this becomes probable! Bear knows

nothing of it, yet I think he must suspect; but it is exactly this that he does not know of it, which takes from me all courage to discover it to him. Ah! I must also confess that my unsettled state of mind has made me during this time less friendly towards him. I have in some degree avoided him; I have withdrawn myself when he has tenderly put his arm round me. I have seen that it grieved him, and yet I could not alter my behaviour. Yet I have myself had, however, the most to endure. Bear is no longer young; he loves undisturbed quiet at home; and it is not to be wondered at that he should dislike the crying and noise of children, and all the trouble which they occasion. And then—after the loss of his property, it must be oppressive to him to have new expenses, new cares to support, which instead of decreasing, continually increase. And if I should have two girls at once, and then, according to Stellan's prophecy, eight in addition, what will he think? How will he be satisfied with it? You cannot tell, Maria, how these thoughts weighed me down!

My poor little maiden! it is not enough that many a suffering, many a bitter experience must be thy lot in the world, but probably thy father will not once welcome thee into life with a smile; perhaps he will press thee with a secret sigh to his bosom. And if thou shouldst lose thy mother early, perhaps even at thy birth—for how many women die in giving life to their children, and I am not strong—who then, my little maiden, will sit fondly by thy cradle? Who will soothe thy disquiet into peace? Who will, later, comfort thee in difficulties? Who will love thee, and teach thee to conduct thyself? Where wilt thou find ever-open arms? My tears flow, and I must conclude.

5th.

But now I dry up my tears, and proceed. Last evening I sat alone, and worked at a little child's cap. My heart was heavy, and my unshed tears choked me. Bear was not come home. The wind blew strongly without, and sounded disagreeably to me. It also occasioned that I did not hear Bear's arrival before he opened, as usual, abruptly the door of the room where I sat. I hastily threw my work under a shawl, blushed, and had scarcely time to bid him good

evening. Bear looked unwontedly cheerful, and exclaimed loudly, "Good evening my little wife, how is it with thee?"

"Very well," answered I: and in order to ward off further questions, asked myself—"What hast thou in thy hand there?"

"Only an ugly pasteboard box. An old woman bothered me to buy it. We will see if thou canst make it of any use to hold thy combs, hair pins, and so on. He set the great pretended box on the table, loosened the cloth in which it was wrapped with a horrible grimace, and before my eyes lay a picture in a costly gold frame. Two figures, as it were, stood living before me in it. The most beautiful Mother-of-God hovered on the clouds, with the Child-God on her arm. It was a copy of Raphael's Madonna Sistina, in black chalk, by the clever Miss Röhl. I saw the heavenly peace in Mary's countenance; I saw the divine, all-illuminating glance of the Child, and I became so comfortable, so heavenly comfortable in my mind, I could not speak, and without being aware of it, ran sweet happy tears on the glass of the picture. I had forgotten all around me; I knew not whether I was on earth or in heaven, when I found myself encircled by Bear's arms, and heard him say with a tender, but affectionately upbraiding voice—"Fanny, why should I not know that I am a father?"

In this moment I became violently affected. I hid my head on his shoulder, and could scarcely stammer forth, "O Bear! I was afraid that you would not be pleased!"

My Maria! how did I feel as I saw Bear drop on his knees before me, as he kissed my hands, my dress, while with great tears in his eyes, and with a faltering voice, he exclaimed—"I not pleased? I not happy? I am delighted! My Fanny, my wife, my child!" In such emotion I had never seen him, and my heart dissolved itself in inexpressible love and joy.

This hour was beautiful, was divine! But one such in this earthly life, and one may be contented; one has understood what heaven is.

After our first extreme agitation had subsided, Bear seated himself by me, and lectured me, half in a tender and sportive and half in a serious tone, on my strange secrecy. My heart was open; I let him read it; I let him see all which of late

had been working there. At first he smiled, then he became more serious, and at last he said, somewhat out of humour
“ But that is very silly, Fanny ! Where has been thy reliance on the Most High ? Does this miserable fear become those who believe in Him and His goodness ?”

“ Ah ! ” I said sighing, “ I believe firmly on Him, and yet children fall down stairs or out of the window, and become cripples or idiots for life.”

“ Well, and what then ? ” said Bear, and looked me in the face with a glance which at once was firm and clear ;—I did not imagine he could have made his eyes so large. I cast my eyes down, and answered softly—“ And children may also become unfortunate.”

“ Well, and what then ? ” exclaimed Bear, and looked at me as before.

“ And what then ! and what then ! ” I cried impatiently, and was very near getting angry ; but Bear’s look again struck me, and penetrated into my inmost soul. I understood him now—understood his manly strength, his love, and piety. “ Bear,” said I with contrition, “ I will trust, with thee ; come what will, I will not murmur, nor despair, but hold fast my faith in the Everlasting Goodness.”

Bear clasped me to his heart.

I was somewhat anxious to avoid going further into the fears which I had entertained, but he had laid himself out to question me, and he would not desist till he had drawn all forth. When I alluded to my doubt regarding himself, he became angry and said—“ How couldst thou think so ill of me, Fanny ? How couldst thou imagine me to be so pitiful, so unnatural a wretch ? This only can excuse thee, that thou wert unwell.”

“ But Bear——now that we are become poor, it will indeed be a matter of great anxiety to bring up and educate children, especially if we have many—if we actually have ten girls ! ” I laughed as I said this, but it was with tearful eyes.

“ That will be done even. We shall find means, never fear. Children that are received in love, bring a blessing with them. The more children, the more paternosters.”

“ But the education—the education ! ” sighed I ; “ what burdens this brings with it, when we consider the demands of the present day.”

"I ask the d—l after the demands of the time, in many respects," muttered Bear; and added with serious and cordial kindness, "We will love our children, Fanny! We will bring them up in a clear and steady fear of God. We will teach them order and diligence. What relates to talent and a finer accomplishment, they shall receive that too if we have the means; if we have them not, then do not let us trouble ourselves about them. The chief thing is, that they become good and useful men; they will then find their way both here and hereafter. Thou, my Fanny, wilt early teach them what is in the hymn which thou art so fond of singing—

He who can read his paternoster right,
Fears neither witch nor devil."

Bear's words and mild and manly expression took hold on and elevated my heart. "No!" I exclaimed, "I will no longer be anxious and fearful. I cannot be so with thee, my Bear. And thou little exiled prophet"—I took up the little cap—"come forth to the light, and speak openly of the mystery!"

How delighted was Bear with the little cap! He had never yet seen anything so neat and pretty. I now sewed on the small lace round it. Bear held it on his great fist, and smiled at it, as if he already saw it adorn the head of his child. The whole evening was a succession of the most joyful feelings and scenes. It would have been too much for me, had not Bear put a bound to it. He made me drink one or two cups of tea, and sought to divert my attention with bread-and-butter. He himself took scarcely anything. He looked at me and at the little cap with tears in his eyes,—we were happy.

9th.

"Where is my sadness, Maria? Where my discoveries of evil, where are my anxious forebodings? It is as if all these had taken their flight at once, never again to return. That lovely picture hangs in my bedroom. I contemplate it many times in the day. I perform before it my morning and evening worship, and it speaks to me: it says to me all that is consolatory, beautiful, and divine. I am now writing before it; and it seems to me as if the Madonna and the Jesus-child looked down upon me with a look of blessing

Oh, my child ! thy mother will no longer be in anxiety on thy behalf. Thou wilt have a tender protector. His glance rests on thee, as the sun's rays fall on the yet unfolded bud. As He is immortal, so art thou immortal. As He went to God, so shalt thou, by Him conducted, go to the Eternal Father. Whatever may be dispensed to thee on earth, we will not despair—we will not, my child, lose our confidence. We will believe that He who has called thy spirit to existence, will sooner or later unfold it, and conduct it to himself. Oh come, my child ! thy earthly father shall with joy press thee to his bosom. Thy mother will live to make thee happy ; she will surround thy cradle with song and joy. From her bosom wilt thou draw thy first nourishment, and there wilt thou first become acquainted with love. Then wilt thou be prepared hereafter to feel and to understand how God loves. O, I will press thee so warmly, so affectionately, to my heart, that no cold wind of life shall be able to chill thee ; that even when the ice of age shall freeze thy blood, thou shalt become warm at the recollections of maternal love !

CHAPTER XXI.

W—, December 13th.

WHILST time and events are passing on, I find myself one fine day quite in love with Bruno. Yes, a man may shoot horses and even dogs, when he is so kind towards his fellow-men. Do you remember what I told you of the family so much to be pitied—of the widow with the many children ? Well then, they are comforted, they have found help. Bruno has lent the widow a capital with which she is enabled to begin a profitable business ; and besides this, has wholly undertaken the bringing-up of the two elder boys. How happy are the rich, who can render such effectual help ! Bruno has done all in the greatest stillness, and commanded the widow to say nothing of it ; but in her joy she has communicated it to Serena, and she was here this forenoon and related the whole to me. A beautiful joy animated her mild countenance while she spoke of it ; but delighted as I was, I could not avoid remarking that the action was not indeed so great, but was rather something natural to a rich man

"That is true," said Serena, "and my grandfather has often done such things as these when he was in more prosperous circumstances; but I could not see Madame E.'s joy without blessing him who was the cause of it."

At this moment some one came. Our conversation was interrupted, and Serena went. Old Dahl is better. Thank God! All is now better. The weather is better, the sick are better; Bear is in good spirits, and my pupils are improving too. In the house we are making sausages for Christmas. I am helping to make them, and singing songs with Sissa and Bengta. Ma chère mère learns to write and play at cards, and is happy in Bruno; who, on his part, behaves most admirably to her; but, as Jean Jacques says, looks gloomy and careworn.

Why does he wear himself away? Why does he avoid those who can and would pour balm into his heart?

19th.

I went yesterday forenoon to the Dahls. Serena was in the ante-room, busy with two young ladies, whom she was instructing in the lovely art of making artificial flowers. Her cheeks had a livelier colour than they have for some time past had; and this rejoiced me. She embraced me, and said softly to me, "Thou wilt go in to my grandmamma awhile, whilst I stay here? Try to enliven her, Fanny; speak of something cheerful to her, she is to-day so cast down."

I found Madame Dahl in her bedroom. She sate there alone in her great arm-chair, and sighed deeply. She received me with motherly kindness, spoke with me concerning myself, and gave me good and prudent counsel; and then fell again into a sad silence, which she broke with these words: "Tell me honestly, Fransiska, dost thou not think that Serena is much gone off of late? Does she not seem to thee to grow thinner and paler every day?"

I answered that I thought to-day she looked healthier than when I saw her last.

"But at any rate dost thou not find her much changed since the summer? Has she not, especially within the last month, looked very much worse?"

I could not deny that this was the case; but added that

Serena would soon be better, and that she thought so herself.

"Ah! my dear child," said Madame Dahl, "that gives me no comfort. Serena is exactly like her late mother, my dear blessed Benjamina. It was exactly thus that she began to look, some months before her death; exactly such pale cheeks, such an unearthly look as this. It was just so she smiled and said to us, 'I am very well. I shall soon be better.' And she never complained, and would never allow that any one should be uneasy on her account. So was she till her last moment. Ah, ah! Serena will soon follow her mother, unless she has some help."

Madame Dahl wiped away her tears, and I did the same, and then said, "Serena is not bodily ill, it is only her mind, her heart, that has suffered; and shall she not have strength enough to overcome this suffering, and to regain her perfect equanimity?"

"Yes, strength to suffer without complaining; to be perfectly resigned; but not strength enough not to die. Ah, dear child! there is something in this love which has continued since childhood, which has taken deep root in her heart. Already as a child she hung on the wild boy with her whole soul. When he came, she laughed and stretched out her little arms towards him; when he went, she was troubled and still; and I have observed that she now feels towards him exactly as she did then. I begin to fear that this love has grown with her growth; and that I have indeed said to my husband, but he would hear nothing of it. It grieves me to have displeased him, but I had no rest after what I saw yesterday."

"What was that, my dear Madame Dahl?"

"We had just drunk tea. Serena was with us. The dear child probably saw that my eyes were fixed on her, for she became suddenly more talkative and more merry than usual. She related to us many things, over which we were obliged heartily to laugh, and I had nearly forgotten my uneasiness, and was disposed to believe that we were right happy. When we had probably thus talked and laughed for an hour, Serena went out, and directly afterwards it was as if some one had said to me, 'Go and see after her.' I went softly into her chamber, and there found her, her forehead leaned against the window. I grasped her head with my hands, and obliged

ner to turn her dear face towards me. Ah, Fransiska! it was bathed in tears. She would have hidden them from me at first; and when she could not, she attributed them to a book which she had been reading, and which had excited her. I made as if I believed her; but I perceived now what hour the clock had struck, and went away with a heart heavier than it ever can be in death. In the evening I would not say anything to my husband to disturb his night's rest; and besides this, Serena came in, and began with her red eyes to read aloud, as if nothing whatever had happened. But this morning I have communicated to him my fears; but he still believes that I have frightened myself with my fancies. Ah! his eyes are dull, and cannot see what mine see."

"But if Bruno shows himself worthy of Serena, will her good parents still delay to make her and him happy?"

"Yes—if! That is an important—if—my dear child. It seems to me very strange of him, that since the day on which he solicited Serena's hand, he has not once been here. And there was so much justice in what my husband said to him,—Bruno must see that. If he really love Serena with his whole heart, this postponement of the matter ought not to keep him away from our house. It was a good action of his towards the E—— family. Almost every one that we meet speaks of him with distinction, but as matters now stand, we may and can do nothing to call him back again. All must now depend on himself and on his behaviour."

At this moment came in old Mr. Dahl. He saluted me friendly, although not so cheerfully as usual; went to his wife, and tapped her on the shoulder. It seemed to me as though he had somewhat good to say, and that he would fain be alone; I said, therefore, that I would seek Serena, and went. In the mean time I would not disturb the flower council in the ante-room, and took another way to Serena's apartment, where I thought to wait for her. Her room is pretty and cheerful. One sees that her affectionate parents wished that she should have it very agreeable; and I know not what atmosphere of peace, order, and pure taste filled the neat abode, and made me there experience a peculiar pleasure. Several paintings adorned the walls, some of them Serena's own work. These distinguished themselves by the simplicity of the subjects, and by the care and truth with which they

were finished. After I had contemplated these, a green curtain attracted my curiosity. I drew it aside, and on well-arranged bookshelves glowed the names of the classical writers of Sweden and Denmark,—of Denmark, poor in people, but rich in talent; small in extent, but great in its intellectual aspiration. They were all old acquaintances of mine; and charmed at finding them there, I touched the dear volumes with a feeling of affection, and said, “Thanks, thanks, for all the strength, all the good, and the heavenly enjoyment, that you have afforded to me and to many.”

On the table lay a book open. It was “Kernell’s Travels.” A pencil lay in the open book. I saw that a part of the page was underlined, and I read.

“Life must become light, if it will not change itself into a lethargic sadness, into an actual death. In this gloomy disposition of mind, man cannot prepare himself for immortality; because he understands it not, and strives not to make himself worthy of it. We call to mind moments of departed pleasure more vividly than the past hours of sorrow. This is a hint that life should be dear to us. Death must not be regarded as a liberation from prison; it is only a step higher, a step out of the valley to the top of the mountain, where we enjoy a more extended prospect, and where we breathe more freely,—out of the valley, into which, indeed, the light and warmth of the sun penetrated, and where also the love of God embraced us. Learn properly to understand and to love life, if thou wilt rightly understand and love eternity. A true Christian must already be happy here on earth—that is the problem of life, which every one of us must with all our power endeavour to solve; that difficult problem whose solution so few have achieved, and which has cost the multitude so much conflict. Yet the more and the greater are the difficulties, the more honourable it is to carry off the victory. **MAN MAY BE DISAPPOINTED IN HIS GREATEST HOPES IN LIFE, WITHOUT, ON THAT ACCOUNT, BECOMING UNHAPPY.** I have long suspected, and am daily more and more by the course of the world, and through my own inward experience, convinced, that there is no other actual misfortune, except this only—**NOT TO HAVE GOD FOR OUR FRIEND.”**

I also underlined the beautiful and strengthening words. I would wish to have them framed in gold. On a little loose

strip of paper, lay in the book by this passage, some words in Serena's own hand. I read them ; they were these : "Yes, all may be borne ; all may be sanctified ; all in life and in the heart may be converted to good, through prayer and labour."

"A great truth, Serena!" thought I, "which I must further discuss with thee." But Serena came not : I became impatient, and went to seek her. I found her not in the ante-room ; but in the sleeping-room I heard voices, the door stood ajar, and I became witness of this scene. Serena kneeled on a footstool at the feet of her grandmother, and had thrown one arm around her neck ; her other hand was given to the old Dahl, who regarded her with an unspeakable expression of tenderness and care in his venerable countenance, while she, with a quiet exaltation in look and tone, said to them : "Be not uneasy, be not troubled on my account, my kind, kind parents ! Believe me, I am quiet, I am contented ; I am your happy and grateful child. I have suffered a short struggle, it is true, and it could not be prevented ; but I am already better, and I shall soon be perfectly strong again. Only be at peace, do not be uneasy !"

I stole quietly away ; I would not listen, neither would I disturb these loving ones. I went back to Serena's room, continued there my observations, took up that page again whereon Serena had written, and held it yet in my hand as she entered. Serena blushed, called me curious, but embraced me with silent affection. "Don't be angry with me, Serena," I said ; "thou must, on the contrary, be right good and humble, since I stand here with the purpose to make thee some reproaches."

"Make me reproaches !" exclaimed Serena smiling ; "now let me hear them !"

"Don't look so lively and secure, Serena ! I am very seriously angry with thee ;" and I now related what Madame Dahl had told me of the scene of last evening, as well as that of which I had that moment been an eye-witness ; and added zealously : "That is not honest of thee, Serena ! That is needless, irrational self-torture. Why represent thyself to thy parents other than what thou really art ? Wherefore infuse into them a false security, while sorrow consumes thee, and this the deeper, the more thou shroudest it within thyself ?"

"And what wouldest thou have me do, dear Fanny?" said Serena, while tears forced themselves into her eyes. "Shall I occasion my aged parents to suffer griefs which they have not power to remove? Shall I embitter their days with my weakness? And would this help me? Would it do me any good? O no, Fanny! That thou canst not wish! That thou canst not suppose. I am convinced that they act for me right, and affectionately; I am convinced that on our side nothing now can or ought to be done. It has grieved me that Bruno could absent himself so long from us,—it seems to me unfriendly, yes, hard of him,—but I have accustomed myself to wait, and I will yet wait more patiently, for he will one day come again; that I feel and am persuaded. But, Fanny, let us not now talk of it; let us not now think of me; we will rather think of anything else. There is now much to be done in preparation for the Golden Marriage. That will be a great, a charming day, Fanny! Think only of the happy and virtuous united life of half a century! Then Christmas is also at hand! Thou and thy good man must eat your Christmas welcome with us. Madame E.'s children are also coming. I have begged my parents to allow me to prepare a little Christmas pleasure for them. Thou wilt come! Ah! that is beautiful. Let us go out immediately, and purchase our Christmas gifts. The weather is fine, and I will be your cashier."

We went. It was a pleasure to see the people in the market, and the joy and eagerness of the children, who, by the side of their parents, hopped about on the new-fallen snow. Serena was delighted with the scene. We exchanged our remarks; we made our purchases. I bought an *Attrape* for Bear. Two pleasant hours fled; and Serena seemed, in her interest and activity for others, to have forgotten that she herself was not happy.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

The pleasant Christmas-eve at Dahls—the rejoicing of the children over their Christmas-tree, full of lights, and presents, and sweetmeats—Serena's motherly behaviour towards them—my pleasure in it—the Christmas supper—the Christmas-eve night,—all this I pass over in haste, in order to proceed thither, where Serena, I, and Bear agreed to go together,

and whither thou, dear Maria, must now accompany me; namely, to

THE EARLY MASS OF CHRISTMAS-DAY.

We were in the church. Its great and beautiful arched roof shone with a thousand tapers. Altar, columns, choir, all glittered,—all was so full of light, and splendour, and gladness. The organ was yet silent. There prevailed a solemn stillness in the church, which by the light rustling of the moving multitude seemed rather to be heightened than disturbed. We seated ourselves in the choir; a long row of tapers opposite to us threw a powerful light upon us. “Thou lookest quite glorified,” said Bear to me as I seated myself. Serena had to me the same appearance. My soul was full of a joyful devotion.

Not far from us, with his back leaned against a pillar, and overshadowed by it, stood a tall dark figure, evidently sunk in deep thought. It was Bruno. His profile was beautiful, but seemed to me unusually pale. He saw us not; his head was bowed down; for him the outer world was not there; but at the first tone of the mighty organ he started and looked up. His eyes and those of Serena met: he made no salutation; she made none; they appeared to be wholly lost in their mutual gaze, and I gazed on them. They seemed to me like spirits which, after long sufferings, meet and are again united in a happy world. Their countenances were pale; but an ineffable expression of love and a kind of blessed pain as it were illuminated them. It was a glance of deep and mutual recognition. Serena’s eyelids sunk wet with tears. Bruno was soon at her side, and kneeling down on her foot-board, he said with a soft but not whispering voice, “Allow me to pray with you.” Serena held the hymn-book so that he could see. As their voices were raised and united themselves in a deep harmonious tone, there went through me a presentiment that these two were destined for each other, that their union is determined in heaven, since it is founded in this sympathy of souls, which is the condition and the guarantee of an immortal wedded felicity.

The moment that this thought arose in me, the question also presented itself to my mind, whether Bear and I sympathized? I felt a desire to ask him what he thought of it; but as I looked at him, as he stood beside me, and without

looking right or left, without being conscious of that which was passing near him, was singing his song of praise with a powerful bass voice and from the bottom of his heart, I was ashamed of my foolish thoughts, and joined in his hymn, feeling inwardly that I reverenced and loved him with my whole soul.

Between Bruno and Serena were now neither word nor look further exchanged; but as she stooped her head in prayer, he bowed his also; when her finger pointed out the verse that should be sung, he followed it; it appeared to make him happy to pray with her. As we left the church he was at her side, and made way for us through the crowd. He conducted us to the carriage; and when this stopped at the house of the Dahls, he was there already, and assisted us to dismount. His face was lit up by the moon, and had a beautiful expression of soft and exalted feeling. "I shall see you soon again," said he to Serena, as he kissed her hand. He then shook hands with Bear and myself, and departed. I have never yet seen him so cheerful and friendly.

We drank our second coffee with the aged Dahls. Serena related to her grandparents with undissembled joy our meeting with Bruno, and his promise very soon to visit them. It appeared to give the old people pleasure.

"What a morning!" said Serena to me, as we were an instant alone together. "O Fanny! life has beautiful, wonderful hours. As I beheld him in the clear light—as he sung with me—ah! I fear only that from this moment my worship was no longer pure—all my prayers were for him!"

May no one have greater sins to repent of!—but now I must leave thee, Maria, for the carriage is come, to fetch us to dine with Ma chère mère.

January 2nd.

We have had a little quarrel, I and my Bear. You recollect my secret—the music-lessons. They arrived at a grand éclat. Bear came in one day in the very middle of the "Bataille de Prague." He was confounded. After the battle came an alarm. May all matrimonial contentions so begin, and so end; then would there much oftener be *Te Deum* sung in families.

5th.

Last evening we had a little, select circle, assembled and united in a great enjoyment. And who were these select? Who should they be besides myself—long life to modesty!—my other self, Bruno, Serena, and the Patriarchs, in whose house we were. There was yet a seventh guest there, to complete the constellation, one who elevated all the rest into his own heaven, and this was—Poesy. Bruno read aloud Tegnér's Axel; and this splendid, and never-to-be-too-often-read poem, now pronounced by Bruno's soulful voice, seemed more transporting than ever. Serena's needle dreamed in her hand, and her eye seemed to have become ear; and we all, old and young, were changed in heart. We became mild, warm, and affectionate. High and beautiful is the lot of the great poet. His lyre is the world, and the strings on which he plays are the souls of men. When he wills it, these tones are called forth, and melt together into a divine harmony.

Thus it was in our little circle. A sweet inexpressible pleasure diffused itself amongst us; we made, as it were, only one happy, loving family. Bruno's otherwise now dark, now flaming glance, beamed with a softened radiance, and rested on Serena with an expression of deep but sorrowful love. Serena was so happy, so gay, so beautiful, that it seemed as if all the darkness in the world would become light before her. She seemed in her blissful heart to desire to embrace and bless every living creature. She saluted me as we went with tears of joy in her eyes, while she said—"Seest thou that he comes again? Seest thou that all will turn out as I said? We shall become one family; united, peaceful, and happy."

"Yes!" thought I, "if the holy spirit of Poetry were but ever with us, and in us; but—ah!"

CHAPTER XXII.

W—, January 12th.

"BLESS me! what a bustle there is, both within and without!" On all sides here we are preparing for the Golden Marriage. I do not know if I have already told you that the great day falls on the 20th of this month. The whole city and country take an interest in it. It is as if all the people

in the place here were related to the old venerable Dahls. Their eight children, with all their families, are expected. I, too, am in action on account of the feast. I help Serena as well as I can, and practise with Bruno a choral song which is to be sung at the festivity. Bruno has composed the music; he is really a master, and it is a pleasure to put oneself under his direction. The persons who are to compose the choir assemble at our house twice a week, and are trained by the strict master, before whom we all stand somewhat in awe. Serena has so much to do in preparation for the feast, and so much to do for all the uncles, aunts, and cousins, that I see very little of her. Once she came and mixed her voice in the chorus, but then vanished all devotion out of the practising; Bruno's body, indeed, sate at the instrument, but his soul was with her. He is often in the evening at the Dahls. He endeavours to gain the good-will of the old people; talks with them, and reads to them. Serena takes her rest; persuades herself that she has acquired a brother, and is happy.

16th.

The young people come from east and west;—Dahls here; Dahls there. Brave men, handsome children; how some families do flourish! A swarm of cousins encounter one another here at every step; brotherships and friendships are concluded; the whole city is in motion. A variety of balls and festivities are to follow in the train of the Golden Wedding; even Ma chère mère will give a great dinner-party. I shall probably not see much of this pleasure and gaiety, since I must keep myself quiet; but I shall hold the joyful feast in my heart.

Bruno is again in a changeable and more gloomy humour, and the gladness is quenched in Serena's looks. Alas!

Miss Hellevi Husgafvel is on this occasion invaluable as counsellor and helper for the Dahl family. She has undertaken the arrangement of a series of living pictures, with which the aged Dahls are to be surprised. She has taken Lagman Hök into her councils; and they drape, and explain, and discuss (dispute too, very likely, a little occasionally), and arrange, etc. I am persuaded that we shall see something beautiful come out of it. There will be a great multitude of people assembled at the Dahls on the eve of the

great day ; and this is as it should be. This marriage must be as publicly and ceremoniously celebrated, as a first marriage should be conducted quietly and modestly. Then, people go on board to sail over a sea where winds and waves are often stormy ; but here, on the contrary, in the Golden Marriage, they have completed their voyage ; they have reached the haven, and can calmly hoist the flag of victory.

Ma chère mère comes to the feast, and I shall have the pleasure of keeping her for the night with me. I will myself roast the coffee, that she may enjoy in the highest perfection the beverage which she prefers to all others.

I have a variety of things to say to thee of the younger branches of the Dahl family, but must defer it till after the marriage, when I shall have more time ; but, in passing, I must tell thee, that I have selected a favourite from amongst them. She is named Mattea ; is a tall, thoroughly plain, but thoroughly good creature, of twenty years of age, who has won my heart by her joyous, open-hearted disposition, her sincere love for Serena, and her splendid playing on the piano.

January 21st.

With whatever thou mayst be employed—be it with the last stitch of a stocking, or the last word of a compliment, or with the contemplation of a portrait, or with a romance of Bulwer, or a discourse on the immortality of the soul with B., or the setting on of a piece of weaving, or the preparation of a citron-cream, or the answer to a love-letter,—leave all in an instant, and sit thee reverently down and read that chapter which I am proposing to write, and which is entitled—

THE GOLDEN MARRIAGE.

If you wish to learn the true beauty and value of marriage, if you wish to see what this union may be for two human hearts, and for life, then observe not the wedded ones in their honeymoon, nor by the cradle of their first child ; not at a time when novelty and hope yet throw a morning glory over the young and new-born world of home : but survey them rather in the more remote years of manhood, when they have proved the world and each other, when they have conquered many an error and many a temptation, in order to become only the more united to each other ; when labours and cares

are theirs ; when under the burden of the day, as well as in hours of repose, they support one another, and find that they are sufficient for each other. Or survey them still further in life ; see them arrived at that period when the world, with all its changes and agitations, rolls far away from them ; when every object around them becomes ever dimmer to them ; when their house is still, when they are solitary, but yet stand there hand in hand, and each reads in the other's eyes only love ; when they, with the same memories and the same hopes, stand on the boundaries of another life, into which they are prepared to enter ; of all the desires of this being, retaining only the one, that they may die on the same day ;—yes, then behold them ! And on that account turn now to the Patriarchs, and to the Golden Marriage.

There is indeed something worth celebrating, thought I, as I awoke in the morning. The sun appeared to be of the same opinion, for it shone on the snow-covered roof of the house or the aged pair. I availed myself of the morning hour, wrapped myself in my cloak, kissed Bear, and trudged forth to carry my congratulations to the old people, and to see if I could in anything be helpful to Serena. The aged pair sate in the ante-room, clad in festal garb, each in his own easy-chair. Two snuff-boxes, a hymn-book, and a large nosegay of fresh flowers, lay on the table. The sun shone in through snow-white curtains. It was cheerful and peaceful in the room, and the Patriarchs appeared in the sunny light as if surrounded by a glory. With emotion I pronounced my congratulation, and was embraced by them as by a father and mother.

"A lovely day, Madame Werner !" said the old gentleman, joyfully, as he looked towards the window.

"Yes, beautiful indeed," I answered ; "so beautiful that the angels of God must rejoice in it. It is the feast of love and truth on the earth."

The two old people smiled, and reached each other a hand. There arose a great commotion in the hall. It was the troop of children and children's children, who all in holiday garb and with joyous looks streamed in to bring their wishes of happiness to their venerable parents. It was charming to see these groups of lovely children cling round the old people, like young saplings round the aged stems. It

was charming to see the little rosy mouths turned up to kiss, the little arms stretching to embrace them, and to hear the clamour of loving words and exulting voices.

I availed myself of this moment quietly to retire and to seek Serena. I found her in the kitchen surrounded with people, and dealing out viands ; for there was to-day a great distribution of food and money by the Dahls to the poor of the place. Serena accompanied the gifts with friendly looks and words, and won blessings for her parents. When the distribution was at an end, Serena accompanied me to her room : there I looked inquiringly into her friendly countenance, and said joyously, "Thou lookest quite happy to-day, Serena!"

"And how could it be otherwise?" answered she ; "all around me to-day are happy. My dear old parents seem to-day to have received their youth again ; and yesterday thou shouldst have heard Fanny, as they sate before the evening fire, and went through their whole life, and spoke of what now stood before them—it was so beautiful, so solemn!"

Miss Hellevi Husgafvel here interrupted us ; we must follow her up to the second story. Here all was dust, noise, and confusion. One saloon was in the act of being hung with drapery and prepared for a ball ; another was preparing for the proposed tableaux. Miss Hellevi, who already saw in spirit how the whole would be arranged, flew lightly as a bird amongst scaffolding, cordage, and a thousand things which stood about, while she said, "See, dear Madame Werner, this will be so, and this so. Won't that be good? Won't it have a good effect?"

"Madame Werner!" called Lagman Hök, down from a ladder on whose top he stood aloft with the face of Dcn Quixote, "won't this lighting-up have a fine effect against the yellow drapery?"

"Excellent! splendid!" I exclaimed with secret anxiety ; "but Lagman Hök, that chandelier will certainly fall! Good Miss Husgafvel, this scaffolding will certainly come all down together!"

The light and lively Miss Birdsnest laughed at my obvious terror ; and I hastened, my ears deafened with the hammering, out of the uncomfortable purgatory which is to conduct to an æsthetic paradise ; but I did not the less praise those

who there busied themselves, although I had myself rather pluck roses without having to feel their thorns. After I had accompanied Serena to other quarters, and consulted with her how various things were to be arranged, I took my leave, with the promise to be there early in the evening. But before I set out, I became witness to a ceremonial scene. A deputation from the corporation of the city appeared in its name, and presented to the venerable pair a large gilt silver cup, as a testimony of the esteem and gratitude of their fellow-citizens. I missed Ma chère mère in the place of the mayor ;—what a stately speech would she not have delivered !

I was glad at dinner to tell over all these things to Bear. His mouth watered to hold his Golden Wedding. To that we probably shall not arrive, but we may possibly attain our silver one. Ah ! I wonder whether our ten daughters will then stand round us ! It would be a lovely marriage-garland. See ! there has fallen a tear at the thought of it !

At six o'clock in the eyening, Bear and his little wife strolled arm-in-arm to the wedding-house. In the street in which it lay, light burned against light ; one window was lit up after another ; cressets burned at the corners of the street ; and presently the street was bright as day, and a great number of people wandered with glad countenances up and down in the still, mild, winter evening. The city was illuminated in honour of its Patriarchs ; the house of the Dahls itself had a sombre look in comparison with the others, but the light was within.

Exactly as we were endeavouring to enter the gate through a crowd of people, who had collected there in order to see the arrivals, my eyes fell on a figure which stood amongst the rest. It was wrapped in a great black shawl ; but the two large burning eyes, which flashed forth from beneath this covering, made me start, and I thought involuntarily on Hagar. In the same instant the figure drew itself back ; and uncertain whether I was right in my conjecture, but with a secret presentiment of misfortune, I entered the marriage-house.

At the door of the saloon Serena met me ; she wore a white garland in her light-brown hair, and at the sight of her vanished every dark thought. Ah ! how charming was she not this evening in the light white dress, with her friendiy

blue eyes, her pure brow, and the heavenly smile on her lips! Had I but had the power to paint her at this moment! As every flower has its moment of perfect beauty, so has a human being moments in which his highest and loveliest life blooms forth, in which he appears what he actually is, what he is in the depth of God's intentions. These fleeting revelations—for there is nothing abiding on the earth—these are that which the genuine artist seeks to lay hold of; and therefore it is unjust to say of a successful portrait, especially that of an intellectual person, that it is flattered. But whither am I wandering? I was speaking of Serena. She was so friendly, so amiable to everybody; and yet—I knew it—she was not in herself happy. Friends and relatives arrived; the rooms became filled. Ma chère mère entered with great stir. She was conducted by Bruno; and although blind, was as high and stately as ever. Heartily she greeted the venerable pair, while she said with a loud voice—"Old friends and old ways I do not quit willingly, and therefore I am here. I am come to wish you happiness, my friends, on this your day of honour. 'Every one is the artificer of his own fortune,' says the proverb; and consequently, if any one would question whether you, my two honoured friends, are happy to-day, it would, I say, be just the same as if any one should question whether the king be a nobleman. It is as certain as the Amen in the church. God bless you!" She shook them heartily by the hand.

Jane Marie was richly dressed and amiable. Bruno was gloomy. His dark eyes followed constantly the light Serena, but received thence no illumination. He was silent and introverted.

By eight o'clock all the guests were assembled. They had drunk tea, eaten ice, and so on, and now fell at once a great silence. The two old people seated themselves in two easy-chairs, which stood near each other in the middle of the saloon, on a richly embroidered mat. Their children and children's children gathered in a half circle around them. A clergyman of noble presence stepped forward, and pronounced an oration on the beauty and holiness of marriage. He concluded with a reference to the life of the venerable pair; which was a better sermon on the excellence of mar-

riage, for life, and for the human heart, than his speech itself. What he said was true and touching. There was not a dry eye in the whole company. Bear and I leaned against each other. A solemn and affectionate mood had affected all, and there prevailed a deep silence through the numerous assembly, but it was not that of weariness.

In the mean time all the preparations for the second division of the festival were complete; and the company ascended up the steps covered with matting to the second story. Here the tableaux were presented, whose beauty and grace exceeded everything that I had anticipated. These at some opportunity I will describe. The last consisted of a well-arranged group of the whole body of the descendants of the Dahls. The chorus was sung during the representation of this tableau, and went off extremely well, especially when we heard it the second time. The whole representation gave general and great pleasure. As the chorus ceased for the second time, and the curtain fell for the last time, the doors of the dance-saloon flew open, a dazzling light streamed thence, and lively music set all the feet and hearts of the young in motion. And now, Maria, take out your eau-de-Cologne bottle, and prepare yourself for a catastrophe, which was as startling as it was unaesthetic. Realities are sometimes sadly prosaic.

The old Dahl had advanced into the dance-saloon on the arm of his granddaughter; the guests followed in lively conversation, when I suddenly became aware of a movement in the great chandelier, the same which had excited my fears in the forenoon. Serena, on whose arm her grandfather leaned, and was speaking to some of those who were near, stood at this moment exactly under it. I raised a cry of terror,—“Take care! the sconce falls!” All glanced in affright upwards; but with the speed of lightning Bruno darted forward and lifted Serena out of danger, in the same instant that the splendid chandelier, with its sixty lights and thousand lustres, fell with a deafening thunder. Bruno himself received a heavy blow on the head. He turned pale and staggered. “Bruno! Bruno!” cried Serena, with the unmistakable and heart-rending tone of love, and caught him in her arms as he fell to the ground. He threw his

arms round her, and pressed her to his bosom ; a blissful smile, like a sunbeam, appeared on his countenance as he sunk and became unconscious.

It is not to be described what a sensation this created in the company. In one moment a misfortune, a declaration of love, and a death, or what most perfectly resembled it !—one might lose his senses with less than this. I confess that I know little of what now took place, till I, a moment afterwards, found myself in a still and dimly-lighted chamber.

Bruno lay upon a sofa. He had been bled, but had not yet returned to consciousness. Bear stood chafing him, and looked quite grim. Ma chère mère supported his head on her lap ; she was silent, but the tears streamed from her blind eyes, and rolled slowly over her colourless cheeks. Not far distant sate Madame Dahl, and Serena lay before her on her knees, and hid her face in her bosom ; their arms were thrown round each other. The old gentleman stood near, his eyes rivetted on his child ; and I stood also by them, speaking consoling words to the nearly unconscious Serena.

"Where is she ?" exclaimed Bruno, awaking out of his death-like stupor, but not yet perfectly in possession of his senses. "Ah ! where is she ? I had her in my arms——she was mine——it was so beautiful.—Thus let me die !—Serena," exclaimed he, still more passionately, "where art thou ?—My bride, wilt thou let the world separate us ?—The world, —men,—what are they to us ? We stand now in the choir of the temple of God, and the angels sing over us the benediction of the Most High. Whither art thou fled ?—Oh ! thou hast taken my heart away with thee. Now is my bosom so empty. Serena, come back !——Give me my life again, Serena !"

"Oh, that is dreadful ! dreadful !" whispered Serena, but embraced more closely the support whose support she was. Bruno had now raised himself. He now saw Serena, and the rest ; and with a vehemence which, whether it were the remains of the confusion of his senses, or proceeded from his own fiery nature, would now burst through every obstacle to its goal, I know not ; but he exclaimed,—"Ah ! I see, I see how it is. You would conceal her ; you would separate her from me ! But why would you do this ? Wherefore would you separate two hearts which have been already united from

their childhood? Do it not. Rather make ~~is~~ day a day of blessing. (Bruno was now perfectly awake.) Oh! give me to-day Serena as my bride."

"This is not the proper moment to speak of such matters," interrupted the old man, half angry, half in emotion; "another time—"

"And why not now?" interposed Bruno, more vehemently, intensely, irresistibly. "Why not this evening make my life blessed? Why not already, to-day, bind me to you by everlasting gratitude? Oh! to-day, to-day, give me Serena! I will not take your darling from you,—let my house be yours; let me partake with her the care of your old age. Dear mother," continued he, while he seized Madame Dahl's hand, and bathed it with his tears, "good, venerable mother, fear nothing for your child; and as you have experienced that the affection, truth, and reverence of a husband make the felicity of a wife, give me to-day Serena!"

The two old people looked at each other, and at Serena. She stood between them, white as the roses in her garland, with downcast eyes, evidently desiring to kneel, and offer herself,—but at which altar? That was the question.

A pause ensued; and now arose Ma chère mère, pale, solemn, but not proud, and thus spoke: "Every one acts best in his own affairs, and therefore I ought perhaps to abstain from interference in this; but as the mother, I will now say one word for my son. I have till now done very little to make him happy, and it is very little that I can yet do, since—" Ma chère mère laid her hand on her eyes, while she obviously contended with her emotion. She soon began again, with firmer, though with a softer tone. "I speak not to persuade you, my honoured friends and neighbours; I will only tell you this, that my son has of late made me rich amends for that in which he offended me in his youth. It is my belief, my persuasion, that he moreover will do honour to his country, that he deserves the best of wives, and that in every respect he will make her happy. My son has long made me the confidant of his affection, and has received my approbation and blessing thereon. So, my dear friends and neighbours, I will merely say that, if you see good to give your granddaughter to my son, it is my opinion that you will act wisely and well. And for the happiness that you will

thus bestow upon my son, shal' I, his mother, to my latest days be thankful to the Lord, and, next to the Lord, to you."

Ma chère mère's words are never without their effect; and in this moment, as she stood blind and almost beseeching—for this expression lay in her unusually soft tone—in this moment her words made a deeper impression than ever. Another circumstance must also have operated on the old Dahls. Serena had, although involuntarily, given a public evidence of her love for Bruno. It was perfectly evident to them that the embrace which united them would on the following day be circulated through the city and the whole country round. Bruno had withdrawn himself a step or two: he seized the hand of his mother, and conveyed it to his lips. The old Dahls took that of Serena, and said—"Wilt thou, wishest thou, to be his, Serena? Wilt thou ~~to-day~~—now—give him thy hand?"

"Yes!" whispered Serena's lips: "oh, my parents—if you are willing—if you allow it—yes!"

"Now then in God's name," exclaimed the old man, "Bruno Mansfelt receive the hand of your bride!"

"Serena mine!" cried Bruno with a voice that went through heart and soul, and sprang to her. The old people yet held her back. "Take her then—make her happy!" said they, with a voice which trembled with emotion. "She is our youngest, dearest child—the joy of our old age; she never acted contrary to our wishes." Tears fell on their withered cheeks, and their trembling hands held Serena yet fast. "Remove her not far from us—let her close our eyes for us—be worthy of her—love her—make her happy!"

"Happy!" exclaimed Bruno, as he took her almost forcibly from her parents, and clasped her to his bosom; "happy! as sure as I hope through her for God's mercy." Bruno led Serena to his mother, and said—"Bless us, my dear mother." Ma chère mère nearly forgot her wonted stately solemnity, and with a voice broken with emotion blessed her children. Hereupon Bruno clasped her in his arms, and for some seconds let his head rest on her bosom. It was beautiful to see them thus stand. Afterwards Ma chère mère and the old Dahls gave each other their hands, and some cordial words were on both sides spoken. "And now to the an-

nouncement," exclaimed the old man, who seemed to desire to dissipate his feelings. "To-day must all joys be common. Come, my wife; come, my dear children. Listen there, good friends without; friends, relatives, listen!—My friends," cried the old man with a cheerful voice, "I have now to announce to you a betrothal; and to beg your good wishes for my granddaughter Serena and her bridegroom Bruno Mansfelt!" It was as if another chandelier had fallen. Never probably were the inhabitants of the good city of W— within the space of one hour so overwhelmed with astonishment. This moment a declaration of love and a death-blow—the next resurrection and betrothal.

A loud murmur of amaze and of congratulation went through the multitude. But I beheld that not all countenances were congratulatory. I saw long and dissatisfied faces; and I believe that Bruno perceived it too, for his dark eyes flared for a moment like two lightning flashes scrutinizingly through the assembly; the thunderbolt on his forehead stood sharp; the eyebrows drew threateningly together; and he changed colour. Ma chère mère stood forward, and intended, I fancy, to make a speech; but I felt the necessity of sparing this to Serena and Bruno, and on that account sprang out, and exclaimed bluntly—"Now, God be praised now I see the prospect of another Golden Marriage; and I hope in fifty years to be able to wish you, Bruno and Serena, heartily as much happiness as now!"

My forwardness had a good effect. Ma chère mère let fall her idea, and so many congratulations came crowding in between, that she never took it up again. In the mean time I stole out. I had said "God be praised!" but yet, false soul, I did not think so. I felt excited, frightened, and filled with gloomy forebodings. I sought Bear; he sought me; and we met. "What is amiss with thee?" said he, and looked at me with terror. "Ah! Bear, I am uneasy, unwell, ill. Now, indeed, they are betrothed! Ah! don't make such horrible faces! It is not a laughing matter!"

"I don't laugh at that, but at——"

"At me, very likely! It were better that you gave me a remedy for palpitation of the heart. Bear! they are betrothed! She, the good, the angelically pure, and he, the —ah! it cannot be well! They will not be happy. What

will be the end of it? Bruno is certainly not worthy of her. He is only half human; and will he ever become wholly so?"

Without giving me any reply, Bear led me into that cabinet in which Bruno had now received Serena's hand. He sate himself gravely down; tore a leaf out of his pocket-book; took his pencil, and I asked, "Wilt thou write a poem? Then it is certainly the death of me!"

"I am writing a prescription for thee," added he with the same phlegm.

He wrote out and gave me these words to read, "Men who do not believe the Word, are by the society of women saved without the Word."

"Bear," said I, as I embraced him, "thou art the best and wisest doctor in the world!"

"It is never so far between the mountains, but that one may meet with ghosts," cried Ma chère mère at the door. "Listen, my chiidren! you have not yet wished me joy, and yet I fancy that it would repay the trouble. I have now gained another amiable daughter; I am a happy mother; sit down beside me, and let us talk of the future couple."

We did so. Ma chère mère drove with her plans far into the future; and the pictures which she saw were distinct. It appeared to be with her as with many who are blind; as the vision of the body is darkened, that of the mind becomes so much the clearer and more cheerful. There we sate pleasantly together till supper. This was served on various little tables in three rooms. At the table where the Patriarchs sate, were also Bruno and Serena, Ma chère mère, Lagman Hök, the Clergyman, Bear, I, and some others. We were tolerably still during the great part of the meal, and I began to fancy that this feast would pass over without Ma chère mère having made a speech in honour of it. But after the turkey, Lagman Hök raised his glass, and begged permission to drink a skål. All were attentive; and with a low voice, and a mild but confident gaze fixed on the Patriarchs, he thus spoke:—"Lyres and flowers were woven into the mat on which our honoured friends this evening heard the words of blessing pronounced over them. They are the symbols of harmony and felicity, and these are the Penates of the house. That they surrounded you, venerable friends, in this festive hour we cannot regard as a mere accident. I seemed to under-

stand their mute language, and as if I heard them say to you, ‘We are here at home. You have, during your union, so welcomed and cherished us, that we can never more forsake you. Your age shall be like your youth !’ ”

The beautiful toast was hailed with universal joy, and drunk to the touched and smiling Patriarchs. “Now! hear that Hök there!” said Ma chère mère, and, as if struck with an electrical shock, she jogged my arm, saying, “Fill my glass!” pushed back her chair with a great noise, coughed, and spoke as follows:—“Love is more than bow and spear. Love pierces through shield and mail. Love finds out unerringly the way! It brought the first human pair together, it will also bring together the last. My friends, may we all be guided by it through life! For genuine love is not German, French, nor Swedish; it is not indeed of the earth, it is heavenly; and offers us here the hand, in order to conduct us to the great marriage yonder above. The man and wife who here united in true love, and in true love walk together, will there sit beside each other. And well may I to-day say with the mother of King Lemuel, ‘Ah! thou son of my life, to whom a virtuous wife is given, she is far more noble than the most precious pearls, she will make sweet to thee all the days of thy life.’ My eyes are become dark, but my heart sees light in my son’s future, and on that account rejoices with great joy as I now drink skål to my son and his betrothed, and at the same time skål to his future parents, my valued friends and neighbours.”

Bruno generally looks fidgety when his mother commences a speech, but now this feeling was expelled by another; and he regarded her with a look so full of love as I had never yet seen in him.

“What will Bear say,” thought I, when we had drunk the skål proposed by Ma chère mère, “now it is his turn? and he is really no orator.”

To my great consternation he said—“Now it is my wife’s turn; I will drink the concluding skål.”

“Horrible Bear!” thought I, quite confounded. I collected myself, however, and said—“Love never grows old; a skål for the oldest and the youngest pair in the company.”

“Bravo, Fransiska!” cried Ma chère mère.

Now followed the skåls so thick and fast on each other that

I kept no exact account of them. I longed that the turn might come to Bear; but it never came, for now drew near the company from the other tables and rooms, one after the other with brimming champagne glasses, and speeches were made, skåls drunk, and some truly beautiful verses for the occasion sung, which gave the old Dahls great pleasure; and with all this Bear and the concluding skål were forgotten. The whole company arose from table with a general thunder of hurrahs! I did not omit to upbraid Bear with his shabby escape from the toast; but he protested that he had really prepared a very long and very poetical speech, which he wished especially to retain to the end, that he might put to the skål drinking, as it were, its crown; and that he lamented sorely that the company, and pre-eminently myself, had suffered the loss of it. I begged him at least to favour me with the beginning of it; but he replied, that he was no friend to beginnings without endings, and that the time would not now admit of the latter, and that I did not seem sufficiently to hold his oratory in honour to listen worthily to it, and so on.

Immediately after supper the English dance commenced. It was most lively, and no one danced so actively and lightly as Miss Hellevi Husgafvel. With the English dance, according to Serena's prudent arrangement, the festivities were at an end, exactly at midnight; for she feared a later hour would too much fatigue her grandparents. The long ceremony of expressing thanks and taking leave was exhausting enough, although it was enlivened by much cordiality. In the very moment when the hall swarmed with people like an ant-hill—ladies who were wrapping themselves in their cloaks, gentlemen who were hunting their caloshes—Ma chère mère fell on one of her merry whims. Already muffled in her "Januarius" and her wolf's-skin shoes, she asked for a violin, and played vigorously an animated Polska.* Everybody was startled; but in the next instant came a sort of dance-madness over them all. They danced in cloaks and great-coats; they sprang hither and thither, across and around: it was all laughter and merriment. They danced in the hall, they danced on the steps; they had much ado to leave off dancing in the very street.

* A popular Swedish dance, full of wild activity.

During the general rush and chaos of joy, I stole forth to see where were Bruno and Serena, for they were not amongst the rest. I went from room to room ; and in one of the most remote, where the tumult of the dancing came but as a soft murmur, I beheld two figures, a dark and a light one. The dark one was Bruno ; he kneeled before—the light one—Serena ; and she stooped towards him, and said softly—“Thou.”

“Thou!” a beautiful word. I seemed for the first time to understand its full harmony, and I hastened away to say it immediately to Bear ; and so well had I hit the tone and expression of Serena, that he instantly understood me, and said also to me—“Thou!”

Ma chère mère had played the last couple out, and now called for me loudly. Exactly as I entered the lobby, which was full of people, my eye fell again on the same dark figure, with the same gloomily flaming eyes, which had terrified me on entering the house, but again drew back ; and as in sudden zeal I determined to follow it, to make certain that my suspicions were right, I was stopped by Bear, who is as careful of me as the Israelites were of the Ark, and does not wish me to fall into the hands of the Philistines. With an “Ah!” in my heart, I followed Ma chère mère into the carriage. Yet burnt the lights and flamed the cressets along the streets. Ma chère mère could discern their glimmer, and was in high spirits, and talkative. Many a pithy proverb issued from her mouth, in honour of this remarkable day. She concluded a long speech in praise of the old Dahls with these three :—“It is not so easy to leap into God’s kingdom.” “He that will gather roses, must not be afraid of the thorns.” “He that sows virtue, reaps a good name.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

W—, February 8th.

YESTERDAY was a great ball at the Town Hall, which the city gave in honour of its Patriarchs. “Thou must go to it,” said I to Bear. “I must not go to it,” he replied : “I mean to stay at home and dance a *pas de deux* with my wife.” I made at first some objections, but was obliged to yield ; and

in the joy of our hearts we actually danced a minuet, to which I sang, and Bear hummed the bass. I then sat down to work on my little prophets—you already know what this name signifies,—Bear opened his conversation-box, which always rejoices me greatly, and out of his copious treasures of the experience of life and men, he brought forth many a precious sample. I have written down some of his relations, and will send them to thee another time. It is a great happiness, Maria, when in a good husband one also possesses a piece of good company. At the Dahls the wedding is already talked of; Bruno drives on with his love, and his arrant wilfulness—he must pardon the expression. It is already determined that it shall take place in May, and that my good friend Mattea shall take Serena's place with the old Dahls. Serena will divide herself between Ramm and her grandparents. She is the most amiable bride, and at the same time the good friend and the same excellent daughter as before. She is still the same shy woman that she was before the betrothal, and will probably as a wife continue equally so; yet her behaviour to Bruno is so fascinating that it compels him almost to worship her. What else shall I say of Bruno? He is good, and not good; happy, and not happy: day and night, sunshine and storm-clouds, continually alternate in him. He appears to me to be like a man who feels that he does not deserve his happiness, and therefore is partly at strife with himself, and in part fears that his happiness will be plucked from him. May I be incorrect in my opinion!

The other day he came into Serena's room, when I was there; but she was absent. He said a few words to me, but soon appeared to forget that I was in the room. He looked at Serena's books, her paintings, her sewing apparatus, with a kind of painful tenderness; he looked around the room, and said softly, as to himself, "Innocence! purity! peace!" He took a little light green silk handkerchief which Serena often wears, kissed it, and hid his face in it; he then rose hastily and went out. I looked at the little shawl; it was wet with tears. "Peace!" said Bruno, and sighed so deeply, so painfully. Ah! peace he has not. He cannot be absent from Serena; but in her company he cannot find peace. He comes and goes continually—two or three times a day. He manifests a love for her, whose vehemence he moderates only for

her sake ; he heaps presents upon her, which she accepts only for his sake ; but his disquiet obviously grieves her. "What the d—l is this for a riving and driving ! I don't see the use of it," muttered Bear just now, on this subject. "It is far better to sit quietly and eat one's sweet groats, is it not ?" said I, as I set a dish of steaming groats on our supper-table. "Yes, when one's own little sweetest of wives eats with one." I was quite satisfied with the politeness, though it breathed somewhat of a groat warmth. But even this warmth must be cherished and esteemed ; without it the myrtle-tree of wedlock does not flourish in the North here.

February 12th.

A horrible event has occurred at the Dahls. A night is since then passed, yet my hand still trembles so that I cannot guide my pen with steadiness. Ah, my forebodings !

Last evening Bear and I were with our friends. Bear sat with the old people ; Serena and Bruno were in the next room. I also was there. I sat at the piano, and played some sacred pieces which I had recently received. By degrees I played lower, and made longer pauses ; for I caught words which rivetted my whole attention. Bruno had been this evening in an unusually gloomy mood, and I heard Serena, who sat by him, ask him what was the cause of it, with that tone of genuine tenderness, with those sweet affectionate words, which woman's love dictates ; and he answered :

"I had last night a wretched dream, the memory of which still oppresses me."

"A dream ?"

"Yes, a dream. Shall I relate it to thee ?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well then, Serena, I dreamed that thou wert my wife. Thou wert my own, the companion of my life, the half of myself, and I—was not happy. Years had flown over ; thou wert mine ; I loved thee, as now, and if possible, still more. We had enjoyed quiet days ; we had already often beheld the sun set, and the stars rise over the Helga lake ; in the shade of night I had enclosed thee in my arms, I had reposed on thy bosom, but I—was not happy. I dreamed that it was again evening. The stars arose, one after the other, and mirrored their quiet beams in the quiet waves ; the heaven

was clear, and the wood lay still and brooding. Thou wert my wife; thou wert in my arms; but I had not peace. There was in my heart a dull pain, as of festering wounds—for the soul, Serena, can have such wounds; but of this thou knowest nothing; and to still the agony, I pressed thee to my heart, but it was only the more torturing. I seem to feel it yet—lay thy hand here, Serena!"

Bruno was silent for a moment, and then proceeded. "There was a change. I found myself alone in the park at Ramm. I chased a stag, and my hounds pursued him with open bloodthirsty mouths. I also was thirsty, I seemed to thirst for blood. Over hill and dale, through wood and meadow, drove furiously the chase. It was a wild hunt. From glen to glen, from thicket to thicket, I pursued the flying stag. Hours flew by; the stag sped on—I followed—the dogs howled in incessant eagerness, it seemed as if the chase never would come to an end. The hounds grew weary; I wearied not; my horse tired, but I spurred him forward; a demon chased me, and I chased the stag, and ever more burning grew my thirst.

"For a moment the chase ceased; I had lost sight of the stag; but as I emerged from a thicket, I suddenly saw him stooping at a brook to drink. He was not far from me, but thirst and weariness overcame fear, he stood still and drank. I shot him down. The report of the gun gave new life to my dogs, they sprung forward, seized the legs of the stag, and entangled his antlers in the bushes. I flung myself from my horse, and flew to give my victim his death-stroke. Already I held my knife at his throat, when he turned on me his beautiful, dying eyes, full of tears, and gazed on me with a sorrowful and reproachful look. I felt, as it were, a dagger thrust into my heart; and dumb and gloomy I looked into those eyes which every moment became more human. At length—O horrible! I saw that those eyes were thy eyes, Serena,—it was thou whom I had murdered. It was thou, who thus gazed on me! Almighty God! if ever thy look——"

"Bruno! Bruno!" Serena tenderly and much excited, exclaimed—"why talk in this manner? It was but a dream and a truly hateful and irrational dream. Look at me, Bruno; no, turn not thy eyes away; look at me, and see that never, never can such a gaze from my eyes fall on thee. Ah! that

thou didst but truly know, truly feel how impossible it is! Hear, Bruno! I have also a dream to relate, and a dream of truer augury than thine. I dreamed, Bruno, that the world was frozen, frozen to ice. There was no more sun, no greenness on the earth, no blue in heaven; in their stead was black and empty space. Magnificent palaces, woods and mountains stood yet, but were converted into ice. Strange and fearful lights, whose origin men did not see, and which diffused no warmth, but on the contrary threw long and hideous shadows, wandered about amongst the ice-forms. All life was destroyed; two human creatures excepted, who yet breathed with warm and beating hearts in this marble world; and these two, Bruno, were thou and I. Solitarily we glided through long colonnades of ice,—we touched not the earth, but yet were not in a condition to raise ourselves above it. Our future was to be—slowly to freeze, the last of all living creatures.

“Thy heart was bitter, my friend, and thy cheek was pale. As the lights came, and threw menacing shadows against thee, thy arm was stretched out as to do battle with them, and thy voice raised wild reverberations. But in the midst of this congealed world, in the midst of this night of horrors and of death, I felt a warmth in my heart which no ice and no time appeared able to extinguish. There was, as it were, a springing fountain of life in it, which diffused itself through my whole being, and endowed me with a higher strength than I had possessed in the sunny vernal days of the earth. I loved thee more intensely than ever, Bruno! It was to me a genuine joy, with thee and for thee to suffer; and as thy heart became quiet and warm on mine, and thy cheek less pale, then I felt an assurance that it was given to me to offer my life for thine, and with the warmth of my heart to defend thee against the cold and the horror-shapes of darkness. I felt myself in this thought so happy, so perfectly happy, that I awoke. My dream was at an end, but clearly did I feel that which I had experienced in my vision! and I have felt it often, and still feel, that I would wish to bear a great pain for thee, because I could then make thee better understand how sincerely I love thee.”

“O God!” said Bruno, with a soft voice, but with an expression of agonised pain, “O God! how little do I deserve

a love like this——how unworthy——Serena! thou sweet angel! thou who shalt be my wife——”

“Never shall she be it!” cried a wild piercing voice, and Hagar, more like a fury than a woman, darted into the room. A dagger flashed in her hand—in the next instant it seemed sheathed in Serena’s heart. But with the speed of lightning Bruno had seized Hagar’s arm; the blow was turned aside, and the dagger only wounded Serena’s shoulder. With the gesture of a madman Bruno wrenched the murderous weapon from Hagar’s hand, pushed her fiercely back, seized with one hand her hair, and the steel glittered above her breast. “Wretch!” he exclaimed, with a hollow voice and white lips—“curse of my life!—die!”

“Bruno! O my God!” cried Serena, as she sprung forward and hung on his arm. Bruno moderated his fury, his wild look became more composed, his lips murmured—“A woman!” and the dagger fell from his hand. He looked at Serena, saw her blood flow, caught her in distraction in his arms, and bore her to a sofa.

“Thy will shall be done!” cried Hagar wildly. “See here, Bruno, thy victim;—it would only die at thy feet!” She ran to him; plunged the dagger into her own breast, and fell before him drenched in her blood. “Bruno, for thee! for thee!” muttered her lips; then were silent; and her eyes closed.

It was the work of a moment. It was horrible, but still more horrible that which followed. Bruno’s despair was mute and gloomy. The old Dahl tore his grey hair, and cried, “My child! my child!” Bear only retained his self-possession; he alone restored order and reflection. “It is but a scratch; there is—upon my life!—no more danger for her than for me,” said he to the grandparents, as he addressed himself to bind up her wound. Serena, however, pushed back his hand, and pointing to Hagar, who lay there motionless, cried, “Help her! help her! she needs it more than I.” But Bear would not leave her till she was bandaged, and then he begged me to conduct her with the weeping old people into another room.

Hagar, who was supposed to be dead, soon however showed signs of life; was laid on a bed, and committed to the care of Bear. With the greatest presence of mind Serena ordered

everything which was necessary for her accommodation, and appeared to forget that she herself had suffered. She sought with the tenderest words to quieten the old people, and stopped their mouths with kisses, when they attempted to cast reproaches on Bruno. "We really know nothing yet," said she, interrupting them beseechingly; "we cannot, we must not yet judge. Let us wait, Bruno will explain all—all may yet be well." On this she went to Bruno, who stood there sunk in gloomy reverie, and said, "Go back this evening to Ramm, Bruno, and come again to-morrow. Then we shall all be more composed. Go, my dear friend, now, but return in the morning, and then, if thou canst, satisfy my parents, and us all."

"Serena! and thou?—and thou?" said he, and stared at her agonizedly. Serena turned away her face to hide the suffering, the expression of which she strove in vain to subdue. "I believe in thee," said she softly, "good night, Bruno:" and she covered her eyes with one hand while she extended to him the other.

"Thou turnest away from me; thou wilt not look at me," said Bruno, with gloomy complaint. Then turned Serena her countenance towards him; she would have smiled at him, but her eyes stood full of tears. Perhaps Bruno saw in this gaze that which he had seen in his dream, for he became like one wild: he uttered a curse upon himself; struck himself with his fist on the forehead, and rushed out.

Bear and I did not this night return home. He sate by Hagar, who had fallen into a violent delirium of fever, and now uttered words of love, and now of raving, but which were alike wild, and bore the impression of an unregulated and desparing soul. I stayed with Serena, whose chamber lies next to that of her grandparents, and tried to persuade her to go to bed, and to endeavour to get some sleep. She consented to my request, and made as if she slept, but I often heard her silently weeping. I was frequently obliged to go to Hagar's chamber, to bring news of her state. Bear does not think her wound mortal. Ever and anon, too, the door of the old people's chamber was softly opened, and anxious questions concerning the beloved child were whispered, and received ever consolatory answers. Bear was with all, growled good-naturedly at all, comforted all, and gave them all some com-

posing drops. Three times in the night came Bruno, yet would not go in, but asked and received from Bear news of the condition of Serena and Hagar, upon which he went off again, as if driven by the Furies.

It was a long and painful night. Serena inquired often, "Is it not nearly morning? Does it not dawn?" Ah! she yearned for morning, because she believed that light and Bruno would come together. The morning came, but Bruno did not; but merely a note from him, containing these wild and disconnected lines. "I should return; I should explain—so thou entreatedst me. Oh! that a wish of thine should from me remain unfulfilled. Serena! I cannot explain—I cannot come! Her I will not see, and thee I cannot; thy look consumes me; I can now give no explanation. Honour commands, but honour also forbids—Hagar can, but will not—Farewell, adored, and to-be-compassionated one, since thou lovest me. I cannot come; but I will surround thee, invisibly, and in wretchedness. Was it not the punishment of the outcast, to behold Paradise, but to see it closed against them with flaming swords? Retribution, dreadful retribution! —Pray for me, Serena, for hell is in my heart."

After the perusal of these lines, Serena leaned her head upon her hand, and sate long thus, as it were lost to the world; but she must certainly have prayed to the Eternal Comforter; she must certainly have lifted her heart to the Father of Love, or otherwise her countenance, as she again raised her head, could not, amid so much anguish, have worn so high and gentle an expression of self-denial. Her first step was to her aged parents; the first words which her lips after this blow uttered were in petition to these to have patience, not to be too hasty in judging, but to await the moment when this mystery should clear itself up, and Bruno should stand before them in a better light. She communicated to them his letter, was skilful enough to turn its expression to his advantage, gave a hint at the probable solution of the mystery, and achieved what she sought. The old people became more composed, and left to her to manage these affairs. How beautiful is such a confidence between parents and children!

I left Serena at breakfast, which with her usual solicitude, she prepared for the o'l people, while she assured them

that she felt no pain from her wound, and that she should speedily be quite well again. I went home to seek rest ; I was fatigued, but yet more uneasy and excited than fatigued. In order to quieten myself, I have written to thee, my Maria, because to impart our troubles to a friend is for the heart the best of opiates. I feel already its beneficial operation, and will now endeavour to sleep.

Bear and Serena have resolved that Hagar shall remain at the Dahls till she either dies or gets better ; she could not yet, without great danger, be removed. For the rest, the horrible affair will be kept as still as possible, and especially will they endeavour to prevent its reaching the ears of Ma chère mère. Ah ! how will all this unfold itself ? I will tell thee more when I know it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TO THE READER, FROM A STRANGE LADY.

BUT Madame Werner knows merely the surface of the following dénouement. Chance made me acquainted with its interior existence, and I now proceed to lift the veil from certain scenes which at this time took place in Hagar's sick chamber. Shadow-shapes I will call them, because they are produced by strong darkness in strong light. They may be compared to those outline profiles which one makes of the faces of our friends, on a winter's evening by candle-light. If the connoisseur of art and of human nature be of opinion that these sketches are far too hasty, and too little finished to deserve a closer attention, but yet possess too many features of truth to be cast aside, I shall be quite satisfied ; and begin quietly—

SHADOW-SHAPE THE FIRST.

Jealousy knocked at the door of my heart,
And cried, " Kill ! kill ! "

In a hushed room, which looked into a garden, lay the sick and guilty Hagar, nursed as if she had been a beloved child of the house. A few days had passed, and Hagar lay now in delirium, now in consciousness. Doctor Werner sat at her bed-side, regarding with astonishment the conflict of passions

which had never disturbed his own peaceful soul. Besides him, and a maid who waited on her, Hagar saw no one ; but an invisible genius watched faithfully over her. The embrocations which refreshed her burning forehead, the draughts which stilled the pain of her wound, were handed to her by Serena.

One evening she lay in a restless slumber. Serena was alone with her, and stole quietly forward to contemplate her for a moment. "God be praised!" whispered her lips ; "God be praised ! thou sleepest, poor and to-be-pitied one. Thou hast destroyed my happiness ; but oh, how much unhappier art thou!"

Hagar awoke. Serena drew herself hastily back, but she had been observed. "Who is there?" she cried sharply. Serena was silent, in the hope that she should not be recognised ; but Hagar continued—"Thou dost not answer, but I know thee. I have seen thee before creeping about my bed, pale maiden, in order to suck my blood. Do not imagine that thou canst deceive me. I know that I am in thy power, and I know what thou wilt do ;—thou wilt torment me, and take away my life with poison. In punishment of my crime, I shall perish by degrees through privation of fresh air. And on that account thou hast taken him away from me, that I may never more see him, never more hear his voice ; for these were my pleasure and my life. He himself has delivered me into thy power to be tormented. Yes, he and all hate me, and rejoice in my misery : but I will deceive him, and all of you ;—I will free myself."

While Hagar said this she sought for the bandage, in order to tear it from her wound ; but Serena flew forward, seized her hands, and held them back with an almost supernatural power. Hagar stared wildly on that gentle countenance, which was bathed with the tears of grief and pity, and said, "Will you preserve my life in order to suffer me to perish the more slowly?"

"O no! no, Hagar! Mistrust me not; I wish you to live."

"I do not believe it. Thou lovest him that I love, him who belongs to me—yes, tremble, faint—who belongs to me, for I had his promise before you! My claims on him are older, holier ;—blood has sealed them. Ha! thou wishest me well! Thou! Away, I know what jealousy is ; this black,

black, black plague, which leads to murder—to madness—which in solitary hours whispers with a clear, ghastly voice, ‘Kill! kill!’ Ha, white maiden! now becomest thou also black, and hatest—hu! all round me is black, black, black——’

Hagar swooned. Serena called in her attendant; and hastened, beside herself with grief, to her own chamber. There she threw herself on her knees, and cried, “O my God! he could thus deceive me!” All was dark around her now, but not long.

SHADOW-SHAPE THE SECOND.

Love is patient and mild.

Hagar. So you really do not desire my death?

Serena. No, Hagar. May you live, and acquire peace.

Hagar. But if I live I shall disturb your peace. If I live you will never be happy.

Serena (with quiet despondency). I have already abandoned this hope.

Hagar. His beloved you might have become; you would then be what I and many others have been; but his wife—never! never! Sarah drives Hagar out of the house. Will you be his beloved?

Serena (quietly). No, Hagar!

Hagar. You are too proud to become that!

Serena was silent.

Hagar. You do not love him! you will sacrifice nothing for him!

Serena. Ah, yes! my life, my earthly happiness—how willingly.

Hagar. That is little. But do you know what I have sacrificed for him? Wealth, station, honour, fatherland, parents, happiness,—all!—all! In my father’s house I could command a thousand slaves. I forsook all, and became his slave; and on that account he must love me—on that account he must become mine!—Who stood by his side in the bloody fight to the death? Who dared with him to scorn the law of damnation, if not I? White maiden! white and cold as the snow on the mountains of thy fatherland! dost thou think that thou canst tear him from me? No! to

me will he come back ; my fire streams also in his veins. Feeble one ! fear his kiss ; it consumes. Fly him, for he is mine here, and beyond the grave. Oh, my wound ! God, what an agony ! Help ! help !

Serena hastened to her. With the soothing ointment which Dr. Werner had prepared she dressed the wound, and bound it up with a gentle and skilful hand.

"Thanks !" said Hagar in a milder tone, " thanks ! thou art kind."

"O Hagar ! love him, but do not hate me."

"No ; I hate thee no longer. Who can hate thee ?"

SHADOW-SHAPE THE THIRD.

If any one compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Hagar (passionately). If you wish me to live, see that he comes back. It were better to lie on the rack and enjoy the sight of his countenance, than be in Paradise without him. They tell me that you have much power over him ; use it then to make him come back, and if possible to forgive me. Jealousy made me wild ; but his hate I do not deserve ; at least not—— Hagar was silent, and sunk in thought. For some days she had been better ; Serena's indefatigable care and gentleness operated like a healing balm on the unhappy one.

Later in the evening Serena sate by Hagar and wrote. Love and sorrow hovered on her lips, which lightly moved, as if she whispered the words into the pen ; but on her lovely brow lay a loftier tranquillity than usual—it was like the victorious repose of Virtue and Love. Hagar observed it ; and in her bold and bitter manner she said abruptly—" You are certainly much satisfied with yourself." Serena blushed, and Hagar proceeded—" You value yourself greatly, no doubt, on being so pure and virtuous. You certainly believe that you stand much higher than such a wretched creature as I am."

"No, in truth not," answered Serena, with a tear in her eye.

" You would indeed be wrong if you did," continued she, " for very dissimilar are our endowments, and still more so our temptations."

"That is true," answered Serena, humbly.

"What indeed has he to boast of who has never been tempted? If you had been tried, you would probably have been no better than many others."

Serena was silent.

"Happy are they whose bosoms are never shaken with passions, whose blood runs softly, whose earliest companions are virtue and peace. If they continue unspotted—if they fall not—small is their merit."

"You are right," said Serena, still and humbly as before. She propped her head on her white hand.

"Fate determines, and the world judges, and both alike blindly," continued she in her bitterness; "and therefore the path of one man is called victory and honour, that of another fall and reprobation."

"But God, who sees in secret," said Serena, with a firmer voice, "God, who is more mighty than fate and the world, will one day make equal what here was unequal. Then, Hagar, will it often happen that he who laboured only in the last hour, will receive a reward equal to his who was called in the first hour."

Hagar raised herself somewhat, and regarded Serena with amazement. "What God lives in thy soul?" demanded she; "and wherefore such gentle words to me—to me, the hated and the outcast?"

"Not hated—not outcast!" said Serena, as she rose up and drew nearer to the sick bed. "Oh, no, Hagar! a milder judge assuredly awaits thee."

With an expression of higher wonder, Hagar fixed her broad and questioning gaze on that sweet countenance which was now near her bed, and looked down on her with an angel's compassion. Serena continued:—"Jealousy has led you to a dark deed, but your love is true and great. I have listened to you, Hagar, as your soul revealed its innermost feelings; I have listened in the hours of twilight and of night, when you believed yourself alone, and I have learned how you love,—no sordid soul, no ordinary woman, can love thus! Passions, circumstances, the darkness in your soul, have led you astray even in spite of yourself; but in clearer moments, and now, Hagar, descend into your heart, and ask yourself whether there be anything which you would not sacri-

fice for Bruno's happiness ; whether there be a suffering which you would not willingly bear for his sake ? Is not your love for him your strongest, yes, is it not now the only deep feeling of your heart ?"

" Yes !" exclaimed Hagar, " I have loved him burningly, inexpressibly—love him yet, but——this love has conducted me to crime !"

" And if you had pierced my heart, Hagar, and I now lay dying near you, I would still say that the work of the moment will not condemn the heart which loves steadfastly !"

Hagar gasped for breath. A refreshing feeling descended into her desperate heart, and quenched its bitter burning. With folded hands, she sunk back on her couch. " Yes," whispered she faintly, " thou art right ! Ah, there is thus one who can understand me, who can believe my words. Hear me then, Serena, thou who hast an angel's gentleness and an angel's serenity in thy soul ; hear me ! I wished not to kill thee ! No, I would not do Bruno such an injury. As I sate in the dark wood alone, and jealousy called up thoughts of murder in my soul, I cast them from me in abhorrence. As I heard of Bruno's betrothal ; as I saw that my fate was irrevocably sealed, I determined to kill myself ; and that I might acquire strength to do it, I would see him with thee, with thee his betrothed bride. Ah ! as I saw thee for the first time, it went like cold steel through my heart ; then I felt that he would love thee differently to what he had loved others. I felt that he was lost for ever to me ; and yet I had his first love, his first promise. But to the matter. I came one evening, and saw you together ; but as I saw thy head leaned on his shoulder, as I heard him call thee his wife, then a Fury rent my heart and my brain. It was jealousy. My soul was wild, and my dagger thirsted for thy blood, before it should cool itself in my own. Yes, it was the work of a moment—a dark, dark moment ! but now a beam of heaven pierces through the vale of night. But thou ! thou whom I would have killed, and who yet givest me life, say who art thou, wonderful maiden ? Art thou a child of heaven, sent down to bring comfort to the earth, and who hast nothing in common with its passions and pains ? Or belongest thou to those forms of witchcraft of which I have

heard tell, who with silver voices and fascinating sounds allure men, and suddenly change themselves into shapes of hell, and drag down the unhappy ones into eternal darkness?"

Hagar's wild and heated fancy seemed in this moment to be ready to realise to her this horrible metamorphosis. With a disturbed look she gazed on Serena, who calmly said :—"I am only a weak woman, to whom, however, God has given the grace to triumph over the passions and agonies of the heart. Read, Hagar, these lines, which will speedily bring him thou lovest back to thee ; read, and no longer mistrust me." Serena gave Hagar the letter which she had just written, and she read :—

"Thou fleest me, Bruno ; thou avoidest our house. Bruno, return. I ask it not only in my own name, and on my behalf, I ask it on behalf of a person who can more readily dispense with light and life, than with thy presence. Come, Bruno, come to this most-to-be-compassionated one. By her couch I await thee. Let us together recall her to life, or together bestow consolation on her last hours. Let us be together, Bruno ! O my friend ! in the darkness which at this moment surrounds me, I yet know one thing with clearness, and that is, that I love thee, and that nothing in the world can pluck this feeling out of my heart. We can determine nothing at this moment in regard to our future relations ; well then, let us leave these to time, and have peace with one another ; and should an obstacle to our union as man and wife arise, that need not be an obstacle to our being friends. Hagar has spoken of claims which she has on thee ; of earlier bonds which bind thee to her. If she has spoken the truth, Bruno, yet is my prayer still the same,—Come back, Bruno, to me and to her !

"Listen, Bruno ; let us become children once more. Let us be, as we were in the days, the beautiful days when we hailed together the morning sun in the woods of Ramm, and when the shades of evening still found us together, full of peace and watchfulness for each other. Dost thou remember an evening when it became dark in the wood, and I asked thee, 'Art thou not afraid to lose thy way in the dark ?' and thou answeredst me, 'With thee the way is clear to me ;' and I said again, 'And with thee I am never afraid in the dark.' Oh, friend of my childhood ! can it not be as it was

then? Life is the wood, and that can be dark—Oh! I have experienced it for some time—let us then go together on the dark path, Bruno; extend me thy hand as friend, as brother: then will the way perhaps for us both yet become clear. Listen to my entreaty,—I make it with tears. Return, Bruno; dear, ever dear friend, return!

“Thine, SERENA.”

With a trembling hand Hagar gave back the letter. “Thou lovest him better than I,” she said. A bitter expression passed over her countenance, and she drew the clothes over her head.

Serena despatched the letter; and a few hours afterwards Bruno was at her feet. They spoke not, but involuntarily embraced each other; and their hearts were involuntarily melted together in one unutterable feeling. From this moment Bruno has been frequently at Hagar’s bed-side; and the wild and bold woman is in his presence a meek and humble one, whom a mere look commands. Bruno’s forgiveness and presence, Serena’s kindness and tenderness, her true and gentle nursing, have operated beneficially on her condition. Dr. Werner has hopes of her life. Fransiska comes sometimes in the evening to visit her friend. Between Bruno and these two accomplished and amiable women have arisen conversations of a high and noble interest, which Hagar has drunk in with eagerness. The old Dahls also have come and joined them; and in the chamber, in the very circle where so much material existed for all that is most unhappy in life, have grown by degrees, through Serena’s influence, peace, interest, yes, even pleasure, at least for the moment; and the circumstance itself which threatened inevitably to rend asunder the bonds of confidence and love, has served only to entwine them the stronger. Beautiful power of goodness, which desires nothing but reconciliation; of wisdom which, like God’s own wisdom, opposes only to division and scattering, a higher harmony, a profounder order and love!

What effect these conversations and their daily association with Serena produced upon Hagar’s feeling and Bruno’s soul, we shall presently see.

SHADOW-SHAPE THE FOURTH.

Drop by drop the still rain pierces
Deep through the hard rock's hardest heart.—*Schiller.*

The storm raged without. One of those evenings was closing in, in which the legends of past ages, of the wild exploits of witches, seem almost to verify themselves ; in which the poor wanderer in the North frequently loses his way. His wife or an aged mother misses him by the evening fire ; but on the next day it is related that he was found dead on the snow in the wood.

Hagar's state had suffered a fresh change. Her strength, which for some time had gone on increasing, and therefore gave hopes of her recovery, suddenly abated, and was followed by a condition of increasing weakness. "It is not her wound only, but her mind," said Dr. Werner, "which preys on her life." It was now silent in the sick chamber ; Serena alone moved about in it with quiet solicitude for the body and soul of the invalid. These also were more composed since she had surrendered herself wholly to her faithful and gentle nurse.

The icy shower struck against the window of the sick chamber, and the tempest tossed the branches of the trees which stood without ; but within burnt a lamp still and clear, and a gentle feminine voice read these words : "I will arise and go to my Father, and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

"Blessed, blessed words!" here cried a faint voice from the bed. "And if I should go home, like the prodigal son, should I, indeed, be thus received ? Great, great is my guilt."

"But the mercy of God is yet greater," answered Serena. "The prodigal son had actually wasted his whole inheritance, but when he returned repentant, he was received in love."

"Well then!" said the invalid, with a burning heart, "I also will return. To my earthly father I cannot return ; he would only receive me with curses, but I will arise and go to my Heavenly Father."

SHADOW-SHAPE THE FIFTH.

Love takes no heed of boundary-line ;
It knows no measure, knows no grave.—*St. Schüts.*

It was night, and the moon shone radiantly. The earth
lay deluged in its beams, so friendly and so still. The snow
covering was gone, and a wind of resurrection awoke the
slumbering to the life of spring. We will follow the beams
of heaven's lamp into Hagar's sick-room, and observe the
forms which there were illuminated by them.

They fall strongly upon a profile which has been beautiful. The features now are sharp and harsh, such as passion and pain are wont to carve out with their keen chisel. The eye which was wont to roll wildly, is now quieter. There is a sainted expression in the wasted countenance, and the hands are as if placed in prayer. Hagar sits upright in bed.

Near, and supporting her, stands a young maiden. Perhaps it is the light of the moon which occasions her to look so snow white, as she stands there like a lily bathed in sunbeams. Perhaps also it may be sufferings which have chased the ruddy colour from her cheeks ; yet it has not been able to steal thence the tranquil grace of her expression, nor to change the delicate and almost childlike roundness of her figure. She is soft, soft as goodness itself, and as captivating. Her look is clear, mild—one might almost say—holy. “Lean more freely on me,” said she softly, to Hagar. “It is Serena !”

In the shadow, and darker than it, stood Bruno, his gloomily frowning gaze rivetted immovably on these two. His breast heaved slowly, but mighty feelings were battling within it. At a distance from the bed, in a tempered and grey twilight, sate two aged forms, still, pale, and resembling apparitions.

Six weeks had fled since the evening on which Hagar had laid a violent hand on her own life ; and like a dying flame, which now blazes up, now sinks again, she had long hovered betwixt life and death ; but the pangs of the last days had been great, and she felt her end drawing near. It was night, as she, awaking out of a protracted state of unconsciousness, desired an interview with Serena’s grandparents ; but when

they came, it was long before she was able to speak. Supported on Serena's faithful bosom, and embraced by her arms, she by degrees gathered some strength, and at her request the aged pair drew near. In brief but strong expressions she thanked them for the kindness they had shown her, and begged their forgiveness for the distress she had occasioned them. "Now," added she, "I will no more distress any one on the earth; I go to meet my last judgment. But before I go, let me do sacrifice to the truth; let me in some degree make restitution for the evil I have done. Hear the confession of a dying woman, and put faith in my last words—I HAVE NOTHING TO CHARGE UPON BRUNO! I have been the shaper of my own fortune. In my father's house we loved one another and were betrothed. It was I who broke the vow; my excesses and crimes awoke his abhorrence. I would draw him down; he fled from me. I pursued him; and it became my fate, that although repulsed and despised by him, I was yet compelled to love him; that I could not breathe except in the fire which consumed me. My love was its own punishment; it has bowed down my soul, but it has also made it better. Bruno tolerated me near him; endured the storm-wind which raged with never-ceasing commotion. This gave me strength to live—yes, to hope that I might yet regain the heart which I had lost. For this I followed him into this land, in whose earth I shall soon rest. Bruno attached himself to Serena, and insisted on my departure. He offered me rich gifts, and implored me to return to my native country. There was not merely the desire but the command in his annihilating words; and I pretended to comply, but took my resolution to perish. My feelings were maddened. Cold was the winter evening on which I determined to put an end to my life. Bruno was with his bride—I was alone in the dark wood;—cold was the winter evening, and on that account my blood was stiffened, my hand benumbed, and would not obey me. I determined to see him and her together;—I ran, I saw them, jealousy made me furious—and the rest you know. Yet once more, forgive—yet once more hear this word;—I have nothing of which to accuse Bruno, but for much to implore his pardon. He deserves your granddaughter; and in the unknown space into which my spirit goes, I will bless him and her. If you

can forgive me, then extend me your hands, that I may press them to my lips. If you pardon me, tell me that you will not prevent this union, which my crime threatened to dissolve ; give to the repentant and the dying this last consolation !”

Hagar was silent. The two old people extended their hands, and spoke to her words of reconciliation ; and on this, as Hagar appeared faint, they softly withdrew. Hagar lay for a moment in unconsciousness ; but speedily revived, turning her expiring eyes towards Serena, and said : “ And now let me thank thee, thou pure, thou clear fountain, which mirrors itself in the heaven of God. For my bitter words thou gavest me kind ones ; for the suffering which I occasioned thee, thou hast ameliorated and sweetened my last hour. Thou hast offered refreshing liquids to my lips ; thou hast poured the oil of compassion into my wounded heart ; thou hast taught me the holy nature of love ; hast effected that gentle feelings now rule in my soul ; that yet at the gate of death I can hope.—Serena, Bruno, give me your hands ! that I, who would have separated them, may now unite them ; that I may pronounce a blessing over them, before my lips are silenced for ever !”

Serena, silently weeping, extended her hand, but Bruno stood immovable. “ He will not !” exclaimed Hagar, with pain ; “ he fears the blessing which my lips would pronounce ; he abhors me even to death !”

“ It is not so, Hagar,” said Bruno, mildly, as he laid lightly his hand on her violently labouring breast, “ have peace with me, even as I have with thee. Thou hast been dear to me, and in this moment thou art so still.”

“ Have everlasting thanks for these words,” exclaimed Hagar, vehemently : “ O speak them once more ; say that thou forgivest me.”

“ Who am I, that I should forgive thee ?” said Bruno, gloomily. “ What right have I to appear better than thou ? We have both erred ; both stand before the Eternal Eye, alike in need of pardon and mercy.”

“ No, not alike !” asserted Hagar. “ Wast it not I who conducted thy fiery, inconsiderate youth to deeds wherein thy heart had no participation ? Was it not I who, like a serpent, wound myself about thy tree of life, and infused

poison into its sap ? Thou it was who awoke in me a human spark ; that which bound me to thee was neither thy beauty nor thy bravery, it was the flame of a higher life, which again and again flashed forth from the tempestuous night of thy existence. In vain would men burn thy strength to ashes ; like the Phœnix, thou arose from the pyre, shook the ashes from thy pinions, and soared towards the light. So didst thou fly before me, and I remained in the dust ; but now—it is so dark ! Now I die with pleasure, since I know that my death is good for thee ; yet hear this one prayer. In the park at Ramm is a grotto ; there I have often rested—it is cool and still ; let me there be buried. And hear ;—my coffin stands in thy house ; it has imbided the atmosphere of thy house, where thou breathest,—lay me in that. Ah ! thy hand does me good ; let it there rest till that heart is still. Farewell, Bruno ! I sink into the dark, still night—and with me the past ! Mayest thou be happy with thy young bride,—with me all is—at an end !”

Hagar was silent. Her hands dropped from those of Bruno, her bosom became still, and the great apparition of life—Death, spread over her features the veil which no mortal can raise. She had ceased to breathe. The beams of the moon grew dim, and the dawn of Easter morning spread its uncertain light through the chamber, and its ruddy glimmer hovered over the pale corpse. A solemn stillness prevailed long around her.

“ Dead !” at length exclaimed Bruno with a hollow voice, as he stooped over Hagar, and was visibly shaken with agonized feelings—“ dead—because she loved me ! Who ever became happy in loving me ? To whom did I ever give joy ? I have darkened the life of my mother ;—here lies the betrothed of my youth ; and ye, unhappy victims, whose existence I have blighted, you also rise up to accuse me ! It is just ! Ye pale shapes, come and place yourselves between me and her who should be my wife,—for I am not worthy of her. I will not deceive her,—I will not steal into her heart with a lie ;—no, no one shall love me, no one follow me, except this spirit of evil which accompanies me through life. I believed that Serena would drive him forth.—Ah ! this angel-look oppresses me, and plunges me still deeper—my usurped heaven would

become my curse! No, I will fly——fly——I will——” A convulsive agitation shook Bruno, and the fixed eye showed that he was no longer master of himself.

“Bruno! Bruno!” cried Serena, with tenderness and pain, as she approached him. “Away!” said he, sternly and wildly. “Away! my love brings misfortune with it. Come not with thy pinions too near the flame of the burning gulf. Fly! fly!”

“Bruno,” said Serena, while spite of his menacing gestures she drew near, and threw her arm round his neck, “talk not so wildly. Be gentle—be still. Thou art unwell, Bruno; come, compose thyself. Sit down here by me; lean on me, my Bruno. I am still thy Serena,—thy bride,—who loves thee so tenderly; who will follow thee through joy and trouble.”

The tension of Bruno’s spirit gave way; his look became gentler; he breathed more softly. “Speak, angel-voice, speak!” said he.

“Thou hast watched too much; thou hast exhausted thyself,” continued Serena, tenderly and caressingly; “now thou must take a little repose. I will watch thee while thou sleepest; and then we will go out together, and behold the sun—the delicious vernal sun, which gives joy and life to all creation. It will be a lovely day, my Bruno!”

Serena’s childlike sweet words, and the testimony of her love, laid the demon in Bruno’s soul. He calmed himself, and appeared to awake out of a painful dream. With a look of inexpressible affection and inexpressible anguish he gazed on Serena. “Oh!” said he with tearful eyes, “never did the harp of David more soothingly charm the frantic spirit to rest. But, Serena, tell me, what have I said? what have I done? and tell me also what thou hast thought of it?”

“Thou wert ill, Bruno; but, thank God! thou art now better, and all is well.”

“No! with me all is not well, Serena; for know, that the frenzy of which thou hast been a witness is no strange guest with me. In the activity of the day—in the silence of the night—it surprises me, till I can again rise into mastership over it. Seest thou, in the moment in which my mother laid the curse upon my head, my spirit received a wound which since then has never healed. Wild deeds and memories have prevented it. Oh, long have I yearned to lay myself at thy

feet with my terrible secret ! but my strength has failed me,—strength, perhaps for ever—but now is the hour come ! Turn thy pure gaze away, Serena !”

Bruno described in rapid but graphic words his first aberrations. “ My brother’s manly kindness,” said he, “ snatched me from the dangerous and destructive path. For a moment I thought to begin a new and better life ; perhaps should have done it, had not the consequences of my first digressions dragged me down. I was early become a secret gambler. I had seduced into the same course a young man of my acquaintance—I was the cause of his misfortunes ; and in order to rescue him, I had recourse anew to forbidden means. My theft was discovered—discovered by my mother ! She would punish me severely—perhaps too severely ; but no, I deserved it. But I would not submit myself ; I met force with force ; I opposed my mother—and she cursed me !”

At these words Bruno’s voice trembled ; he paused an instant, and then proceeded.

“ I fled the same night, my heart possessed with furies, which have since then never quitted me. I went into foreign service, and earned wounds and honour. When the war was ended, I fell into connexions which fettered my heart, and confounded the remaining ideas of right and goodness which I had brought with me from the maternal home. Loaded with the curse of my mother, and bearing in my bosom a storm of unbridled passions, I sought to gratify these ; I sought to forget that I had a home, a mother, a native land ; to forget that I was cursed !—ah ! that was an icy feeling in my heart which drove me continually deeper into the fire of perdition. The men with whom I was now surrounded, the desire of gain, the very danger with which the enterprise was attended, drove me to that which I shall for ever repent ;—I became a dealer in men, a trader in human souls ! I tore the children of Africa from their huts ; I tore with violence husband from wife, mothers from their children, and carried them as slaves to the Portuguese colonies. Men—my brethren—I sold for gain ! They who then exerted a powerful influence over my mind had represented to me these unhappy people as destitute of all moral worth,—yes, as actually ranking below the beasts. A terrible circumstance opened my blinded eyes ;—let me now pass it over in

silence ; I could not relate it with equanimity. Enough ;—from that moment I abandoned my bloody trade. Again I changed name and country.

“ To forget and to enjoy were now more than ever the impelling objects of my life. At the faro-table I wooed Fortune, and she was auspicious. One evening I won a heavy sum from a very young man. Gold lightened round me, and blinded my eyes ; but the ashy ghastliness of desperation which overspread the countenance of my opponent as he left the room, recalled me to reflection. Perhaps he had a mother who—— I hastened out after him. I would give him back all that he had lost. I ran up the pitch-dark street, and called the name of the unfortunate youth, which I happened to know. A flash and a report were the answer to my call ; fragments of the brain of the unhappy man flew to my very feet. He was the only son of a destitute widow !

“ I abandoned the faro-table ; I sought to repair in some degree the evils which I had perpetrated ; I sought to ameliorate the burdens of those classes of men against whom I had transgressed. But what is the benevolence of the gambler ? It is like the alms of the robber—it is a blood-penny ! No atonement can thence arise to the heart. I felt it—I sought love. Love, I imagined, would enable me to forget the past, and enjoy the present. I plunged into love, and sank into the arms of—no, holy love, not into thy arms—but in those of voluptuousness was my life consumed. I persuaded myself that I loved—I was deceived. I deceived others, and revelled in excess after excess. But as the waves fled the lip of Tantalus, so fled peace and enjoyment from me. During fifteen years I had probably moments of wild pleasure, but not one hour to which I would say—‘ Remain !’ not a day to which I would address the petition—‘ Come again !’ An inexpressible emptiness, which nothing appeared capable of filling—a consuming thirst after something, I know not what—reigned in my soul. At times, in more tranquil hours—yes, even in those of the wildest enjoyment —came before my spirit an image whose fascinating and yet agonizing effect on my heart it is impossible for me to describe. All that my years of childhood had possessed of innocent and beautiful—all that I had at times dreamed of heaven and its peace—appeared to blend themselves into one

shape ; and that shape, Serena, wore thy features. Thence arose in my soul an ineffable longing and despair.

“ Once more I tore myself from my effeminate and dissolute career. I sought to employ my life, which oppressed me, in a widely-extended and systematic activity. I launched into speculations of commerce ; they prospered, and I became rich. But, ah ! my heart still remained poor ; and in the midst of my superfluity my soul hungered. It was at this period that my affairs conducted me to England. I heard Canning address the representatives of a great people for the abolition of the slave trade, for liberty, and the good of mankind. I saw on his brow the glory of an immortal beauty ; and for the first time I comprehended the moral worth and the true nobility of man, and the baseness of my former life. O Serena ! then did I bewail the days and the vigour which I had wasted ! But I was still young ; yet could I begin—what ? An outcast, a son with the maternal imprecation on his head, what good can he commence ? what blessings can he receive from above ? I was cursed ! That was the brand which was stamped on my forehead—the stone which lay upon my life, and doomed it to eternal darkness. What angel could roll the stone away ? Oh, long did my soul wrestle in benumbing despair ; for my mother is the only being whom I have ever feared. Often since my childhood had our spirits contended ; but she had always triumphed, had always cast mine down. Bitterness grew in my heart ; but long years passed away, and love came back into it, and grew and overspread all the bitterness. The thoughts of reconciliation with her were the only thoughts in my soul. This reconciliation was the condition of a new, of a better life ; without it the whole world was nothing to me. I had no hope ; but if I would live, I must dare. So powerfully had this feeling laid hold on my being, that I was physically enfeebled by it ; at the very word ‘Mother,’ I could weep like a child.

“ I came back : I saw my paternal home again ; I saw also thee, Serena !—the paradise of my childhood, my revelation of heaven, the object of my desire, the reformation of my life and being,—I saw all this in thee. Wonder not that my arms extended themselves longingly to secure thee ; wonder not that when I saw myself an outcast from the maternal bosom,

I sought to acquire through thee the blessedness of life and love—sought to win an angel for my distempered soul. There hovered at this moment a doom over me, on which depended more than mere life and death; it was reconciliation, or the eternal perdition of my soul. There lay a thunder-cloud on my heart and brain; I neither saw nor felt clearly. It was then that I tempted thee, Serena; thou withstoodest me, and I believed that I loved thee less; but I deceived myself; thou hadst sunk only deeper into my spirit, and wert become one with its good genius. But this I did not then feel; my mind was dark.

“A moment of wild desperation passed over, and I became reconciled to my mother. I rested my head on her bosom, I heard her bless me! Almighty God! rich in mercy, wouldst thou weigh out to me against this moment a hundred years of suffering, yet could I lift my hands to thee as now, and thank thee for this moment! Words cannot express its value; it has saved me both in time and eternity.

“What shall I say further to thee, Serena? Although reconciled with my mother, and loving her more intensely than ever, I felt, after the first moments of heavenly blessedness, no rest in my heart. Thee, thee must I win. Thou must become my wife, if I must enjoy peace on earth. I sought to win thee in the way which thou thyself hadst pointed out to me—I was rejected. It was not wounded pride, Serena, which induced me for a long time to absent myself from your house; no but I descended into myself, and endeavoured to renounce thee. It was in vain! a nameless, irresistible power drew me back to thee; there was a bond between us which seemed to me to be twined by God himself. Thou wert mine! Oh, moment of transport! of god-like blessedness! Thou wert mine—and life was renovated, the past was forgotten, all was atoned for and purified. Oh! it was but for a moment; the Furies speedily raised themselves again in my heart—the chastening goddesses of memory; and thy acquiescence, thy pure glance, became to me piercing reproaches. I was not worthy of thee, every day made me more sensible of it; and doubly unworthy I felt myself, that I would draw thee down into a life of whose darkness thou wert ignorant; for in vain would I delude myself—never can I be at rest; never can the blessedness of a pure heart dwell

in my bosom. What has been done, cannot be undone ; there are circumstances in my life which never can be forgotten ; remembrances which will pursue me to the grave ! O Serena ! thy innocent hand should not be laid in one stained with so many crimes ; thou, the pure, the blessed, shouldst not stand in connexion with him on whom secretly lies the bann of expulsion from civil society ; at least thou oughtest not to surrender thy youth, thy beauty, thy womanly virtue, to a deceiver. This has of late become perfectly clear to me. It has become clear that if I abused thy confidence, and made thee unhappy—and happy never can the partner of my days and nights be—then indeed must I become an eternal reprobate. These thoughts have long agitated me. Hagar's crimes and thy virtues, thy conquest over me and her, have brought them to maturity. I love thee now, Serena, as highly and sacredly as I before loved thee wildly and egotistically, and therefore I have unveiled my soul before thee, as before its eternal Creator. The altar has not yet united us, thou canst yet separate thyself from me ; canst yet withdraw thyself. Thou art at this moment free ; and if thou rejectest me, yet shall no complaint, no reproach pass my lips. If thou also turnest thyself away from me, I will yet love and honour thee, and will go on my own solitary and dreary path, as well as I may.

"Thou hast spoken of friendship ; of brother and sister ; pardon me, if I rend away this illusion of an angelically pure heart. It cannot be so between us. God created our souls of far different natures ; in mine burn flames, of which thou knowest nothing ; I must possess thee, or fly thee ; but if I fly thee, Serena, I shall yet carry thy image in my bosom, and it will make me a better man. I am not alone—I have a mother. I will live for her, should it even be without pleasure or enjoyment. Yet let me add but one word. I have hoped, Serena, thou whom I alone have ever truly loved,—to be able to begin on thy bosom, on thy angel's heart, a new and better life. I believed that the better germs in my soul would unfold themselves under thy protection—and who can say what the heart augurs—and who measures the strength of love ? Who sets bounds to the mercy of the Almighty ? With thee appeared the way to open to atonement and a better life—without thee—but I have said enough.

Now thou knowest all, Serena,—pronounce the judgment over me. I stoop my head before thee, and will kiss thy beloved hand, let it dispense me what it will—Life or Death."

As the Seraph Eloa, says the noble poet of the Messiah,* descended at the side of the Saviour into hell, and saw there the darkness and misery, its clear glance became quenched in gloom. A feeling like that of Eloa had, during Bruno's confession, oppressed Serena; and an indescribable weight lay upon her heart, and impeded its action; but it was rolled away, and vanished. As the fresh wind blows away the fog; as the clear stars come forth in the dark night; as the glow of morning ascends and illumines and fills all creation with splendour,—so rose in Serena's heart the eternal love, strong, abundant, sweet, and triumphant. In her soul all became lighter, freer, more assured than ever,—there was no more fear, no more disquiet there; and as Bruno ceased to speak, she stooped towards him with silent tears of affection in her eyes, and said,—“I go with thee, Bruno. O my friend, my husband! it cannot be otherwise. Together let us wander on the earth, together one day kneel before the throne of the All-merciful!”

Speechless, Bruno clasped her to his bosom. Light broke in. A song arose, beautiful and peaceful, and embraced the united ones in its melodious waves. It was the Easter Hymn, sounding from the church for the celebration of the First-Born of the Resurrection.

These scenes are at an end; and with them my task. With hearty goodwill I surrender again the pen to the hand of Madame Werner! but just at this time, namely, after Hagar's death, occurs a material gap in her correspondence, the positive cause of which it is not in my power to state, and which I am not enabled to fill up. Thou must therefore, worthy Reader, content thyself with proceeding to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXV.

Rosenvik, May 23rd.

HERE again! I sit alone, and have despatched Bear to Ramm, there to look well about him, and in the first place to

* Klopstock.

take his own pleasure, and then to confer on me that of hearing how affairs stand after the wedding. I do not find myself very well. I am heavy and dull ; look towards Ramm's grey walls ; think on Serena, and long for Bear. Evening draws on ; he must certainly soon appear. I have not been well since Serena's wedding-day : I was too much excited. Bruno's disquiet on this day, his nearly wild questions to Serena, "Wilt thou become mine in joy and sorrow, in time and eternity ?" what do they portend ? "I will answer thee this evening," said Serena, in her sweet, sincere manner. That pacified him ; and at evening, as they were affianced, and the blessing was pronounced over them, he became changed. A profound sense of gratitude appeared to thank, exalt, and to calm his spirit. Ah ! wherefore this disquietude, wherefore this pair in the bosom of happiness itself, if his conscience had peace ?

But am I not wrong to feel such uneasiness and anxiety, when I have witnessed in Bruno so much genuine love ; and in Serena, a tenderness, a truth and strength, which ennable and embellish everything ? In the marriage hour there was something in her which seemed to elevate their union above all the power of misfortune and mutability. There lay a heavenly serenity on her pure brow ; she pronounced the words, "To love thee in joy and trouble," with such a beautiful and lofty certainty that I involuntarily pronounced them again to Bear, as I leaned on his shoulder, and stood there supported by his faithful arm. How the occurrences of this day still hover before my mind ! They seized powerfully, too powerfully upon me ! How long Bear stays. The shadow of the trees are already large, and the birds begin their even-song. God grant that no misfortune has happened at Ramm ! the old black house there looks like a place of ill-luck. Why must Serena go there ? Thank God ! there comes Bear ; I will go down towards the bridge to meet him.

24th.

FRAGMENT OF A CONVERSATION OF YESTERDAY.

" Well, Bear, it was beautiful what thou saidst of Serena, that she looked so amiable, and the Patriarchs so satisfied. Tell me now, how was Ma chère mère ?"

" Superb, but not lively."

" Did she make no speech?"

" No, she was unusually still, but appeared satisfied and internally thankful."

" And how behaved Bruno towards her?"

" Like the tenderest of sons."

" And towards Serena? What did he call her? Did he look much at her. How much did he look at her? Was he much about her? Did he talk much with her? Did he show much attention to her, much solicitude about her?

" My dear child, it would be quite as well if thou hadst a less 'flux de bouche,' then one might answer regularly. Now let us see, what was the first question! Whether Bruno behaved to his wife as became a husband?"

" Ah! thou art unbearable! Did he lie at her feet?"

" Not exactly. That would not have been quite appropriate in so great a company; but there seemed on the whole to exist a good understanding between them."

" A good understanding! Thou talkest quite pitifully. Perhaps thou wilt think that I ought to thank God that they don't quarrel?"

" That thou canst not do, for they did quarrel!"

" Good gracious! About what?"

" Heaven knows what was the occasion, but he said: 'My sweet Serena, my wife, it shall be as thou wilt!' and she answered, 'No, Bruno, is shall be as thou hast said; it is best so.'"

" Well, thank God! How thou canst frighten one! And how did Bruno look as he said, 'My wife?'"

" How?—like a husband?"

" Who adored his wife?"

" Why yes:—and who feels that he possesses in her life's greatest good."

" See! now thou speakest beautifully, my Bear! And then the dinner, Bear? Tell me now a little about the dinner. Describe me all the dishes in succession. Thou dost not remember them! Oh! it is wretched of thee! Yes, certainly thou rememberest some. Let us see; the first course, for instance, which always relishes the best, what did that consist of?"

" I believe——of chickens."

" Chickens! impossible. Serena cannot have chickens for

the first course ; she must then have ham to the roast meat.' Bear laughed at my zeal ; and after some other unfortunate attempts to come at a notion of the dinner, I was compelled to give it up, and to tell Bear that he was an unworthy guest, and that I would tell Serena of it. In order to divert my attention, and propitiate me, he conjured up, I know not how, a bottle of Bishop, and a basket of splendid preserved fruits, which he had brought from Ramm ; compelled, as he said, against his will by Serena.

I was quite enchanted with this little entertainment, fetched glasses, and we sate down to drink healths. We drank the health of the young couple, the health of Ma chère mère, our own, and that of the little unknown. We got quite into a zealous mood with our health-drinking. We then seated ourselves at the window : it was a lovely evening, and the heaven lay clear over Ramm. A gleam from the setting sun illuminated the dark wood ; and I recollect that I had once before seen this, and had thought on Serena. I saw the shore, before so dusky, now brightly lit up. I looked at Bear, who did not turn his full-moon face away from me ; a warmth glanced about my heart, tears came into my eyes, and I said, pointing towards Ramm, "It is more clear there, Bear ; now there are happy hearts there."

"No happier than here," said Bear, as he drew me tenderly to him, and held me fast on his knee. The sunshine slowly died away ; the shore was again shrouded in gloom. and with a deep sigh I added, "Ah ! who knows how long they will continue happy there ? God knows whether Bruno, this unquiet spirit, can be at peace." A melodious tremor passed through the air, and appeared to answer to my sigh. I was startled ; and we listened at the open window. The organ at Ramm was pealing, but not as formerly ; tones like those of Handel's Messiah issued from it. I leaned my head against Bear's, and thus we sat in the warm May evening, and listened. And till late in the evening the organ sounded even more beautifully, more peacefully, as it seemed to me ; and I called to mind the last words of the Legend of the Neck : "Then the Neck wept no more, but took his harp, and played and sung sweetly till deep in the night, for he now knew that he should be saved."

25th.

Jane Marie was here yesterday ; she was gay and joyous. I learned various matters from her ; and amongst them some which delighted me. Ma chère mère grows ever more quiet and gentle, goes often to church, and her proverbs become ever more biblical. Her heart seems now more than formerly to desire to make men happy. She gives much to the poor ; amongst the rest old linen ; and through that prepares, according to the lively expression of a young and amiable lady, "her heavenly purple." Jane Marie related a little scene between Elsa and Ma chère mère, which gave me pleasure. Ma chère mère had to-day knocked down and broken a couple of china cups which stood on a table. She was put out of humour by it. She will sometimes in little matters act too much the person who can see ; and in the heat of the moments lets fall "the deuce !" and similar expressions of anger on Elsa, for having put them in the wrong place. Ma chère mère was wrong ; but Elsa, who formerly always protested with strong words against any injustice of the kind, now let it pass very quietly for her own fault. A moment afterwards, as Ma chère mère sat at her netting, and let her needle fall under the sofa, Elsa—who is always at hand when she can be of service—went down on her knees to pick it up, and gave it to her again. Ma chère mère on this laid her arm gently round her faithful servant, and said, with emotion, "My dear Elsa, what should I do if I had not thee ?" Elsa embraced the knees of her mistress, pressed her forehead against them, and a tear of tenderness and joy quietly rolled down her bony cheeks.

Jean Jacques regulates and commands freely at Carlsfors ; abolishes all abuses ; and makes many useful arrangements. He is an active and highly-informed man ; and talks less since he has done more. He and Jane Marie extend their influence continually at Carlsfors, while Ma chère mère seems more and more to withdraw herself from the affairs of the world. Music gives her more pleasure than ever ; and she has once said, that she could wish to die amid the tones of Bruno's organ. The next week she is going to give the new-married pair a great dinner. Miss Hellevi Husgafvel will also give, in honour of them, a select soirée.

It is said that Nature and Art propose to make a union in

the persons of young Robert Stålmark and Adele von P. They have made the discovery of each other's excellences at Miss Husgafvel's soirées in the course of the winter; have fallen consequently in love, and are become thereby much more amiable.

Lagman Hök has, during the spring, suffered much from his liver complaint; has been obliged to confine himself long to his room, where he has been diligently visited by his neighbours and friends. Ma chère mère has been twice a week to see him, and I too have now and then passed an hour with the still and interesting old man. Yesterday, Jane Marie informed me, he had been again, for the first time, to Carlsfors. Ma chère mère and he walked their *trall* together, she holding by a line which was stretched across the room.

We hear that cousin Stellan will travel this summer into Italy on account of his health; in truth, in order to dissipate his ennui, but I fear that this will go along with him.

Peter and Ebba are expected in the autumn. It will be a pleasure to see them again, and I shall be anxious to observe how the sisters-in-law will now agree. Jane Marie expects visits from some Stockholm acquaintances, and promises herself a gay summer.

But while all around me rejoice themselves; love, dance, and prepare entertainments—I go, perhaps with hasty strides, towards my last hour; but I think no longer of it with uneasiness, I have arranged all my little affairs, and hold myself in readiness for what may come. I have written a letter for Bear, which, if I die, shall tell him how dear he is to me, and how happy he has made me during our short union. My poor, good Bear! He is now so uneasy, so anxious about me, that it internally troubles me. I see that he will never do for my doctor; I must now have courage for us both. I will follow the example of a young friend who found herself in a similar situation to mine, and what was worse in a solitary house in the country, and hemmed in by snow-drifts; but that she might keep herself in spirits, she translated some of the finest scenes of Shakspeare. I have no Shakspeare at hand, but I will set on and write an epistle to those who are more the subject of my thoughts.

TO MY DAUGHTERS.

Above all things, my dear daughters, bear in mind that you are human beings. Be good, be true ; the rest will follow. As much as possible, be kind to every one ; tender to every animal. Be without sentimentality and affectation. Affectation is a miserable art, my daughters—despise it, as truly as you would acquire moral worth. Do not regard yourselves as very important, let you have as many talents and endowments as you may ; consider nature and life, and be humble. Should you be treated by nature like a hard step-mother, and be infirm, ordinary, or the like, do not be discouraged ; you may draw near to the Most High. Require not much from other people, especially from one another. The art to sink in the esteem of yourselves and others, is to make great demands, and give little.

If you are straitened in this world, look up to heaven ; but not as turkey-cocks, but as believing children. Should one of you fall, let her immediately determine to arise again ; to the failing, as well as to the unfortunate, there is always extended a helping hand. Lay hold on this.

Ah ! my daughters——

Fourteen days later.

What is become of my daughters ? They have turned themselves into a son ! and the young gentleman was uncourteous enough to interrupt the letter to his sisters. There he lies in the new wicker cradle, under the green taffety canopy, well-grown, round, and fat ; and the great Bear is on his knees beside his little Bear. I have a great mind to join him in his idolatry ; but Bear the father considers it more fitting that the son wait on his mother. I am proud of my little boy ; but so it is, I had so certainly calculated on a little maiden, that I almost miss her. But as Ma chère mère comforted me—"deferring prevents no recurring."

" What shall I do with my letter, Bear ? It is not adapted to the honourable gentleman there."

" I will take care of it for our girls ;—write another for the youngster."

Happy, my Maria, is the wife who can, like me, give to

her son from heart and soul this exhortation—"Resemble thy father!"

"No, Bear! thou mayst not see what I have written. Thou mayst not take my paper away, thou tyrant! I promise to conclude very soon, but I must yet add a word or two."

These good people and Neighbours! From all sides they have sent me flowers, and jellies, and all sorts of good things. Serena has nursed me the whole time like a sister. She is quiet, kind, sympathizing; in one word, like herself; and seems to entertain a love for Bruno which is too inward to express itself in words. My Maria, I invite you to stand godmother to my little Bear. He is to be called Lars Peter, and Ma chère mère will herself convey him to the font. She was here the day after his birth, and laid a beautiful present on his cradle. She spoke with me about my fears and troubles on this head, and said gaily, "Well, it is in these things as in life,—'all is well that ends well,' "

"No, Bear! my paper,—my pen,—oh! thou abominable Bear!"

END OF THE NEIGHBOURS.

HOPES.

I HAD a peculiar method of wandering without very much pain along the stormy path of life, although, in a physical as well as in a moral sense, I wandered almost barefoot,—I *hoped*, hoped from day to day; in the morning my hopes rested on evening, in the evening on the morning; in the autumn upon the spring, in spring upon the autumn; from this year to the next, and thus, amid mere hopes, I had passed through nearly thirty years of my life, without, of all my privations, painfully perceiving the want of anything but whole boots. Nevertheless, I consoled myself easily for this out of doors in the open air, but in a drawing-room it always gave me an uneasy manner to have to turn the heels, as being the part least torn, to the front. Much more oppressive was it to me, truly, that I could in the abodes of misery only console with kind words.

I comforted myself, like a thousand others, by a hopeful glance upon the rolling wheel of fortune, and with the philosophical remark, “when the time comes, comes the counsel.”

As a poor assistant to a country clergyman with a narrow income and meagre table, morally becoming mouldy in the company of the scolding housekeeper, of the willingly fuddled clergyman, of a foolish young gentleman, and the daughters of the house, who, with high shoulders and turned-in toes, went from morning to night paying visits, I felt a peculiarly strange emotion of tenderness and joy as one of my acquaintance informed me by writing, that my uncle, the Merchant P—, in Stockholm, to me personally unknown, now lay dying, and in a paroxysm of kindred affection had inquired after his good-for-nothing nephew.

With a flat, meagre little bundle, and a million of rich hopes, the grateful nephew now allows himself to be shook up hill and down hill, upon an uncommonly uncomfortable and stiff-necked peasant-cart, and arrived head-over-heels in the capital.

In the inn where I alighted I ordered for myself a little—only a very little breakfast,—a trifle—a bit of bread-and-butter—a few eggs.

The landlord and a fat gentleman walked up and down the saloon and chatted. “Nay, that I must say,” said the fat gentleman, “this Merchant P——, who died the day before yesterday, he was a fine fellow.”

“Yes, yes,” thought I; “aha, aha, a fine fellow, who had heaps of money! Hear you, my friend” (to the waiter), “could not you get me a bit of venison, or some other solid dish? Hear you, a cup of bouillon would not be amiss. Look after it, but quick!”

“Yes,” said mine host now, “it is strong! Thirty thousand dollars, and they banko! Nobody in the whole world could have dreamed of it—thirty thousand!”

“Thirty thousand!” repeated I, in my exultant soul, “thirty thousand! Hear, youth, waiter! Make haste, give me here thirty thou——; no, give me here banko——no, give me here a glass of wine, I mean;” and from head to heart there sang in me, amid the trumpet-beat of every pulse in alternating echoes, “Thirty thousand! Thirty thousand!”

“Yes,” continued the fat gentleman, “and would you believe that in the mass of debts there are nine hundred dollars for cutlets, and five thousand dollars for champagne. And now all his creditors stand there prettily, and open their mouths; all the things in the house are hardly worth two farthings; and out of the house they find, as the only indemnification—a calasch!”

“Aha, that is something quite different! Hear you, youth, waiter! Eh, come you here! take that meat, and the bouillon, and the wine away again; and hear you, observe well, that I have not eaten a morsel of all this. How could I, indeed; I that ever since I opened my eyes this morning have done nothing else but eat (a horrible untruth!), and it just now occurs to me that it would therefore be unnecessary to pay money for such a superfluous feast.”

“But you have actually ordered it,” replied the waiter, in a state of excitement.

“My friend,” I replied, and seized myself behind the ear, a place whence people, who are in embarrassment, are accus-

tomed in some sort of way to obtain the necessary help—"my friend, it was a mistake for which I must not be punished; for it was not my fault that a rich heir, for whom I ordered the breakfast, is all at once become poor,—yes, poorer than many a poor devil, because he has lost more than the half of his present means upon the future. If he, under these circumstances, as you may well imagine, cannot pay for a dear breakfast, yet it does not prevent my paying for the eggs which I have devoured, and giving you over and above something handsome for your trouble, as business compels me to move off from here immediately!"

By my excellent logic, and the "something handsome," I removed from my throat, with a bleeding heart and a watering mouth, that dear breakfast, and wandered forth into the city, with my little bundle under my arm, to seek for a cheap room, whilst I considered where I was to get the money for it.

In consequence of the violent coming in contact of hope and reality I had a little headache. But when I saw upon my ramble a gentleman, ornamented with ribbons and stars, alight from a magnificent carriage, who had a pale yellow complexion, a deeply-wrinkled brow, and above his eyebrows an intelligible trace of ill-humour; when I saw a young count, with whom I had become acquainted in the University of Upsala, walking along as if he were about to fall on his nose from age and weariness of life, I held up my head, inhaled the air, which accidentally (unfortunately) at this place was filled with the smell of smoked sausage, and extolled poverty and a pure heart.

I found at length, in a remote street, a little room, which was more suited to my gloomy prospects than to the bright hopes which I cherished two hours before.

I had obtained permission to spend the winter in Stockholm, and had thought of spending it in quite a different way to what now was to be expected. But what was to be done? To let the courage sink was the worst of all; to lay the hands in the lap and look up to heaven, not much better. "The sun breaks forth when one least expects it," thought I, as heavy autumn clouds descended upon the city. I determined to use all the means I could to obtain for

myself a decent subsistence, with a somewhat pleasanter prospect for the future, than was opened to me under the miserable protection of Pastor G., and, in the mean time, to earn my daily bread by copying,—a sorrowful expedient in a sorrowful condition.

Thus I passed my days amid fruitless endeavours to find ears which might not be deaf, amid the heart-wearing occupation of writing out fairly the empty productions of empty heads, with my dinners becoming more and more scanty, and with ascending hopes, until that evening against whose date I afterwards made a cross in my calendar.

My host had just left me with the friendly admonition to pay the first quarter's rent on the following day, if I did not prefer (the politeness is French) to march forth again with bag and baggage on a voyage of discovery through the streets of the city.

It was just eight o'clock, on an indescribably cold November evening, when I was revived with this affectionate salutation on my return from a visit to a sick person, for whom I, perhaps—really somewhat inconsiderately, had emptied my purse.

I snuffed my sleepy thin candle with my fingers, and glanced around the little dark chamber, for the further use of which I must soon see myself compelled to gold-making.

“Diogenes dwelt worse,” sighed I, with a submissive mind, as I drew a lame table from the window where the wind and rain were not contented to stop outside. At that moment my eye fell upon a brilliantly blazing fire in a kitchen, which lay, Tantalus-like, directly opposite to my modest room, where the fireplace was as dark as possible. “Cooks, men and women, have the happiest lot of all serving mortals!” thought I, as, with a secret desire to play that fire-tending game, I contemplated the well-fed dame, amid iron-pots and stewpans, standing there like an empress in the glory of the fire-light, and with the fire-tongs-sceptre rummaging about majestically in the glowing realm.

A story higher, I had, through a window, which was concealed by no envious curtain, the view into a brightly lighted room, where a numerous family were assembled round a tea-table covered with cups and bread-baskets.

I was stiff in my whole body, from cold and damp. How empty it was in that part which may be called the magazine, I do not say : but, ah, good Heavens ! thought I, if, however, that pretty girl, who over there takes a cup of tea-nectar and rich splendid rusks to that fat gentleman who, from satiety, can hardly raise himself from the sofa, would but reach out her lovely hand a little further, and could—she would with a thousand kisses—in vain !—ah, the satiated gentleman takes his cup ; he steeps and steeps his rusk with such eternal slowness—it might be wine. Now the charming girl caresses him. I am curious whether it is the dear papa himself, or the uncle, or, perhaps—— Ah, the enviable mortal ! But no, it is quite impossible ; he is at least forty years older than she. See, that indeed must be his wife—an elderly lady, who sits near him on the sofa, and who offers rusks to the young lady. The old lady seems very dignified ; but to whom does she go now ? I cannot see the person. An ear and a piece of a shoulder are all that peeps forth near the window. I cannot exactly take it amiss, that the respectable person turns his back to me ; but that he keeps the young lady a quarter of an hour standing before him, lets her curtsey and offer her good things, does thoroughly provoke me. It must be a lady—a man could not be so unpolite towards this angelic being. But—or—now she takes the cup ; and now, O woe ! a great man's hand grasps into the rusk-basket—the savage ! and how he helps himself—the churl ! I should like to know whether it is her brother,—he was perhaps hungry, poor fellow ! Now come in, one after the other, two lovely children, who are like the sister. I wonder now, whether the good man with one ear has left anything remaining. That most charming of girls, how she caresses the little ones, and kisses them, and gives to them all the rusks and the cakes that have escaped the fingers of Monsieur Gobble. Now she has had herself, the sweet child ! of the whole entertainment, no more than me—the smell.

What a movement suddenly takes place in the room ! The old gentleman heaves himself up from the sofa—the person with one ear starts forward, and in so doing, gives the young lady a blow (the dromedary !) which makes her knock against the tea-table, whereby the poor lady, who was just

about springing up from the sofa, is pushed down again—the children hop about and clap their hands—the door flies open—a young officer enters—the young girl throws herself into his arms. So, indeed! Aha, now we have it! I put to my shutters so violently that they cracked, and seated myself on a chair, quite wet through with rain, and with my knees trembling.

What had I to do at the window? That is what one gets when one is inquisitive.

Eight days ago, this family had removed from the country into the handsome house opposite to me; and it had never yet occurred to me to ask who they were, or whence they came. What need was there for me to-night to make myself acquainted with their domestic concerns in an illicit manner? How could it interest me? I was in an ill-humour; perhaps, too, I felt some little heartache. But for all that, true to my resolution, not to give myself up to anxious thoughts when they could do no good, I seized the pen with stiff fingers, and, in order to dissipate my vexation, wished to attempt a description of domestic happiness, of a happiness which I had never enjoyed. For the rest, I philosophised whilst I blew upon my stiffened hands. “Am I the first who, in the hot hour of fancy, has sought for a warmth which the stern world of reality has denied him? Six dollars for a measure of fir-wood. Yes, prosit, thou art not likely to get it before December! I write!”

“Happy, threefold happy, the family, in whose narrow contracted circle no heart bleeds solitarily, or solitarily rejoices! No look, no smile, remains unanswered; and where the friends say daily, not with words but with deeds, to each other, ‘Thy cares, thy joys, thy happiness, are mine also!’

“Lovely is the peaceful, the quiet home, which closes itself protectingly around the weary pilgrim through life—which, around its friendly blazing hearth, assembles for repose the old man leaning on his staff, the strong man, the affectionate wife, and happy children, who, shouting and exulting, hop about in their earthly heaven, and closing a day spent in the pastimes of innocence, repeat a thanksgiving prayer with smiling lips, and drop asleep on the bosom of their parents,

whilst the gentle voice of the mother tells them, in whispered cradle-tones, how around their couch—

The little angels in a ring,
Stand round about to keep
A watchful guard upon the bed
Where little children sleep."

Here I was obliged to leave off, because I felt something resembling a drop of rain come forth from my eye, and therefore could not any longer see clearly.

"How many," thought I, as my reflections, against my will, took a melancholy turn—"how many are there who must, to their sorrow, do without this highest happiness of earthly life—domestic happiness!"

For one moment I contemplated myself in the only whole glass which I had in my room—that of *truth*,—and then wrote again with gloomy feeling:—"Unhappy, indeed, may the forlorn one be called, who, in the anxious and cool moments of life (which, indeed, come so often), is pressed to no faithful heart, whose sigh nobody returns, whose quiet grief nobody alleviates with a 'I understand thee, I suffer with thee!'

"He is cast down, nobody raises him up; he weeps, nobody sees it, nobody will see it; he goes, nobody follows him; he comes, nobody goes to meet him; he rests, nobody watches over him. He is lonely. Oh, how unfortunate he is! Why dies he not? Ah, who would weep for him? How cold is a grave which no warm tears of love moisten!

"He is lonesome in the winter night; for him the earth has no flowers, and dark burn the lights of heaven. Why wanders he, the lonesome one; why waits he; why flies he not, the shadow, to the land of shades? Ah, he still hopes, he is a mendicant who begs for joy, who yet waits in the eleventh hour, that a merciful hand may give him an alms.

"One only little blossom of earth will he gather, bear it upon his heart, in order henceforth not so lonesomely, not so entirely lonesome, to wander down to rest."

It was my own condition which I described. I deplored myself.

Early deprived of my parents, without brothers and sisters, friends and relations, I stood in the world yet so solitary and

forlorn, that but for an inward confidence in heaven, and a naturally happy temper, I should often enough have wished to leave this contemptuous world ; till now, however, I had almost constantly hoped from the future, and this more from an instinctive feeling that this might be the best, than to subdue by philosophy every too vivid wish for an agreeable present time, because it was altogether so opposed to possibility. For some time, however, alas ! it had been otherwise with me ; I felt, and especially this evening, more than ever an inexpressible desire to have somebody to love,—to have some one about me who would cleave to me—who would be a friend to me ;—in short, to have (for me the highest felicity on earth) a wife—a beloved, devoted wife ! Oh, she would comfort me, she would cheer me ! her affection, even in the poorest hut, would make of me a king. That the love-fire of my heart would not insure the faithful being at my side from being frozen was soon made clearly sensible to me by an involuntary shudder. More dejected than ever, I rose up and walked a few times about my room (that is to say, two steps right forward, and then turn back again). The sense of my condition followed me like the shadow on the wall, and for the first time in my life I felt myself cast down, and threw a gloomy look on my dark future. I had no patron, therefore could not reckon upon promotion for a long time, consequently also not upon my own bread—on a friend—a wife, I mean.

“ But what in all the world,” said I yet once more seriously to myself, “ what helps beating one’s brains ? ” Yet once more I tried to get rid of all anxious thoughts. “ If, however, a Christian soul could only come to me this evening ! Let it be whoever it would—friend or foe—it would be better than this solitude. Yes, even if an inhabitant of the world of spirits opened the door, he would be welcome to me ! What was that ? Three blows on the door ! I will not, however, believe it—again three ! ” I went and opened ; there was nobody there ; only the wind went howling up and down the stairs. I hastily shut the door again, thrust my hands into my pockets, and went up and down for a while humming aloud. Some moments afterwards I fancied I heard a sigh ! —I was silent, and listened,—again there was very evidently

sigh—and yet once again, so deep and so mournful, that I exclaimed with secret terror, “Who is there?” No answer.

For a moment I stood still, and considered what this really could mean, when a horrible noise, as if cats were sent with yells lumbering down the whole flight of stairs, and ended with a mighty blow against my door, put an end to my indecision. I took up the candle, and a stick, and went out. At the moment when I opened the door my light was blown out. A gigantic white figure glimmered opposite to me, and I felt myself suddenly embraced by two strong arms. I cried for help, and struggled so actively to get loose, that both myself and my adversary fell to the ground, but so that I lay uppermost. Like an arrow I sprung again upright, and was about to fetch a light, when I stumbled over something—Heaven knows what it was (I firmly believe that somebody held me fast by the feet), by which I fell a second time, struck my head on the corner of the table, and lost my consciousness, whilst a suspicious noise, which had great resemblance to laughter, rung in my ears.

When I again opened my eyes, they met a dazzling blaze of light. I closed them again, and listened to a confused noise around me—opened them again a very little, and endeavoured to distinguish the objects which surrounded me, which appeared to me so enigmatical and strange that I almost feared my mind had wandered. I lay upon a sofa, and—No, I really did not deceive myself,—that charming girl, who on this evening had so incessantly floated before my thoughts, stood actually beside me, and with a heavenly expression of sympathy bathed my head with vinegar. A young man whose countenance seemed known to me, held my hand between his. I perceived also the fat gentleman, another thin one, the lady, the children, and in distant twilight I saw the shimmer of the paradise of the tea-table; in short, I found myself by an incomprehensible whim of fate amidst the family which an hour before I had contemplated with such lively sympathy.

When I again had returned to full consciousness, the young man embraced me several times with military vehemence.

"Do you then no longer know me?" cried he indignantly as he saw me petrified body and soul. "Have you then forgotten August D——, whose life a short time since you saved at the peril of your own? whom you so handsomely fished up, with danger to yourself, from having for ever to remain in the uninteresting company of fishes? See here, my father, my mother, my sister Wilhelmina!"

I pressed his hand; and now the parents embraced me. With a stout blow of the fist upon the table, August's father exclaimed, "And because you have saved my son's life, and because you are such a downright honest and good fellow, and have suffered hunger yourself—that you might give others to eat—you shall really have the parsonage at H—— Yes, you shall become clergyman! I say—I have *jus patronatum*, you understand!"

For a good while I was not at all in a condition to comprehend, to think, or to speak; and before all had been cleared up by a thousand explanations, I could understand nothing clearly excepting that Wilhelmina was not—that Wilhelmina was August's sister.

He had returned this evening from a journey of service, during which, in the preceding summer, chance had given to me the good fortune to rescue him from a danger, into which youthful heat and excess of spirit had thrown him. I had not seen him again since this occurrence; earlier, I had made a passing acquaintance with him, had drunk brotherhood with him at the university, and after that had forgotten my dear brother.

He had now related this occurrence to his family, with the easily kindled-up enthusiasm of youth, together with what he knew of me beside, and what he did not know. The father, who had a living in his gift, and who (as I afterwards found) had made from his window some compassionate remarks upon my meagre dinner-table, determined, assailed by the prayers of his son, to raise me from the lap of poverty to the summit of fortune. August would in his rapture announce to me my good luck instantly, and in order, at the same time, to gratify his passion for merry jokes, made himself known upon my stairs in a way which occasioned me a severe, although not dangerous, contusion on the temples,

and the unexpected removal across the street, out of the deepest darkness into the brightest light. The good youth besought a thousand times forgiveness for his thoughtlessness ; a thousand times I assured him that it was not worth the trouble to speak of such a trifling blow. And in fact, the living was a balsam, which would have made a greater wound than this imperceptible also.

Astonished, and somewhat embarrassed, I now perceived that the ear and the shoulder, whose possessor had seized so horribly upon the contents of the rusk-basket, and over whom I had poured out my gall, belonged to nobody else than to August's father and my patron. The fat gentleman who sate upon the sofa, was Wilhelmina's uncle.

The kindness and gaiety of my new friends made me soon feel at home and happy. The old people treated me like a child of the house, the young ones as a brother, and the two little ones seemed to anticipate a gingerbread-friend in me.

After I had received two cups of tea from Wilhelmina's pretty hand, to which I almost feared taking, in my abstraction of mind, more rusks than my excellent patron, I rose up to take my leave. They insisted absolutely upon my passing the night there ; but I abode by my determination of spending the first happy night in my old habitation, amid thanksgiving to the lofty Ruler of my fate.

They all embraced me afresh ; and I now also embraced all rightly, from the bottom of my heart, Wilhelmina also, although not without having gracious permission first. "I might as well have left that alone," thought I afterwards, "if it is to be the first and the last time!" August accompanied me back.

My host stood in my room amid the overturned chairs and tables, with a countenance which alternated between rain and sunshine ; on one side his mouth drew itself with a reluctant smile up to his ear, on the other it crept for vexation down to his double chin ; the eyes followed the same direction, and the whole had the look of a combat, till the tone in which August indicated to him that he should leave us alone, changed all into the most friendly, grinning mien, and the proprietor of the same vanished from the door with the most submissive bows.

August was in despair about my table, my chair, my bed, and so on. It was with difficulty that I withheld him from cudgelling the host who would take money for such a hole. I was obliged to satisfy him with the most holy assurances, that on the following day I would remove without delay. "But tell him," prayed August, "before you pay him, that he is a villain, a usurer, a cheat, a — or if you like, I will —."

"No, no, heaven defend us!" interrupted I, "be quiet, and let me only manage."

After my young friend had left me, I passed several happy hours in thinking on the change in my fate, and inwardly thanking God for it.

My thoughts then rambled to the parsonage; and heaven knows what fat oxen and cows, what pleasure-grounds, with flowers, fruits, and vegetables, I saw in spirit surrounding my new paradise, where my Eve walked by my side, and supported on my arm; and especially what an innumerable crowd of happy and edified people I saw streaming from the church when I had preached. I baptized, I confirmed, I comforted my beloved community in the zeal and warmth of my heart —and forgot only the funerals.

Every poor clergyman who has received a living, every mortal, especially to whom unexpectedly a long cherished wish has been accomplished, will easily picture to himself my state.

Later in the night it sunk at last like a veil before my eyes, and my thoughts fell by degrees into a bewilderment which exhibited on every hand strange images. I preached with a loud voice in my church, and the congregation slept. After the service the people came out of the church like oxen and cows, and bellowed against me when I would have admonished them. I wished to embrace my wife, but could not separate her from a great turnip, which increased every moment, and at last grew over both our heads. I endeavoured to climb up a ladder to heaven, whose stars beckoned kindly and brightly to me; but potatoes, grass, vetches, and peas, entangled my feet unmercifully, and hindered every step. At last I saw myself in the midst of my possessions walking upon my head, and whilst in my sleepy soul I greatly won

dered how this was possible, I slept soundly in the remembrance of my dream. Yet then, however, I must unconsciously have continued the chain of my pastoral thoughts, for I woke in the morning with the sound of my own voice loudly exclaiming, "Amen!"

That the occurrences of the former evening were actual truth, and no dream, I could only convince myself with difficulty, till August paid me a visit, and invited me to dine with his parents.

The living, Wilhelmina, the dinner, the new chain of hopes for the future which beamed from the bright sun of the present, all surprised me anew with a joy which one can feel very well, but never can describe.

Out of the depths of a thankful heart, I saluted the new life which opened to me, with the firm determination, that let happen what might, yet always to *do the right, and to hope for the best.*

Two years after this, I sate on an autumn evening in my beloved parsonage by the fire. Near to me sate my dear little wife, my sweet Wilhelmina, and spun. I was just about to read to her a sermon which I intended to preach on the next Sunday, and from which I promised myself much edification, as well for her as for the assembled congregation. Whilst I was turning over the leaves, a loose paper fell out. It was the paper upon which, on that evening two years before, in a very different situation, I had written down my cheerful and my sad thoughts. I showed it to my wife. She read, smiled with a tear in her eye, and with a roguish countenance which, as I fancy, is peculiar to her, took the pen and wrote on the other side of the paper:

"The author can now, thank God, strike out a description which would stand in perfect contrast to that which he once, in a dark hour, sketched of an unfortunate person, as he himself was then.

"Now he is no more lonesome, no more deserted. His quiet sighs are answered, his secret griefs shared, by a wife tenderly devoted to him. He goes, her heart follows him; he comes back, she meets him with smiles; his tears flow not unobserved, they are dried by her hand, and his smiles beam again in hers; for him she gathers flowers, to wreath around

his brow, to strew in his path. He has his own fireside, friends devoted to him, and counts as his relations all those who have none of their own. He loves, he is beloved ; he can make people happy, he is himself happy."

Truly had my Wilhelmina described the present ; and, animated by feelings which are gay and delicious as the beams of the spring sun, I will now, as hitherto, let my little troop of light hopes bound out into the future.

I hope, too, that my sermon for the next Sunday may not be without benefit to my hearers ; and even if the obdurate should sleep, I hope that neither this nor any other of the greater or the less unpleasantnesses which can happen to me, may go to my heart and disturb my rest. I know my Wilhelmina, and believe also that I know myself sufficiently, to hope with certainty that I may always make her happy. The sweet angel has given me hope that we may soon be able to add a little creature to our little happy family, I hope, in the future, to be yet multiplied. For my children I have all kinds of hopes *in petto*. If I have a son, I hope that he will be my successor ; if I have a daughter, then—if August would wait—but I fancy that he is just about to be married.

I hope in time to find a publisher for my sermons. I hope to live yet a hundred years with my wife.

We—that is to say, my Wilhelmina and I—hope, during this time, to be able to dry a great many tears, and to shed as few ourselves as our lot, as children of the earth, may permit.

We hope not to survive each other.

Lastly, we hope always to be able to hope ; and when the hour comes that the hopes of the green earth vanish before the clear light of eternal certainty, then we hope that the All-good Father may pass a mild sentence upon his grateful and in humility hoping children.

THE TWINS.

Two charming rosebuds (the last in my garden) are ~~frozen~~ in this October night. I had so heartily pleased myself with the thought of delighting my old mother, who is a great friend of flowers, and, especially at this season, calls them her jewels, with two beautiful roses. Now my two hopeful buds hang without life and colour on the stem ; they are gone—and with them my little birthday pleasure.

I contemplated them long, and felt the while tears come to my eyes. They were consecrated to the memory of two rosebuds of a nobler kind, which, hopeful as these lovely flowers, like these also withered away early before the night-frost of life.

Edward and Ellna, my young friends, how often in lonely hours does your friendly image visit me ! Like mild breezes of spring are the remembrances of you wafted to me from the time when I was so often with you,—heard you, saw you, and in you the loveliest things which God had created on earth.

When I now see splendid fruit which has fallen before its maturity, a blossom with a worm in the bud, anything beautiful and good which soon vanishes, then I think on—Edward and Ellna !

Behold there, the beautiful country-seat surrounded by a magnificent park, where they dwelt with their happy mother ! They were the youngest of many children which she had borne, the only ones for which she had not yet wept.

They were her darlings, her all.

They were so lovely that one could not contemplate them without emotion. The eye, wearied with the many unpleasantnesses and adversities which everywhere meet it, would repose with delight upon these charming beings, who in the pure glory of child-like innocence stood there, like promises of a fairer and better creation.

Their smile was particularly charming—oh, it was mirrored in their souls, that depth of innocence and joy ! Two dew-drops, sent down from heaven in order to refresh the earth, reflect their image in their breast.

“ Happy childhood ! ” have I heard thousands exclaim, who had already drank deeper from the cup of life, to whose edge

children have only set their lips, and kissed away the fiery foam. "Happy childhood!" to thee is vouchsafed to drink amid pastimes the pure nectar of joy—whilst we, amid weariness and labour, seek in vain for a refreshing drop in the mournful draught which is extended to us.

And yet for all that, it appears to me that it is not with justice that childhood is called so happy. How many tears are shed by children! Tears of impatience, of desire, of anger; tears which shame and reproaches wring out; tears of envy, of indignation, and of despair,—in one word, all the passions which poison the draught of life to maturer hearts.

It is true that they need not shed these tears, if a wise commiserating hand always removed the thorns from the path which the little pilgrims of life tread. But often, quite too often, they are not removed—they are strewn upon it. Constraint, unjust reproaches, grow up like poisonous nettles around the poor little ones. How often have I seen it; how often have I exclaimed, "You poor children, you poor little children! why did they give a life to you, whose few spring-flowers they do not permit you to pluck?"

Freedom—freedom, this west-wind of joy, whose pure spirit alone is able to bring forth to perfection every flower of creation—if they gave but freedom to you innocent little ones, to you—born for immortality—who must wander through a stormy land! The breezes of freedom, not the simoom-wind of constraint, should attend your first steps, and the world then would not see so many feeble wanderers sink down powerless, and crawl wearily along their way.

The first years of Edward and Ellna's life passed on in innocent freedom. Beautiful, friendly nature was their cradle. In the fields, in the woods and groves, now they played, and now they rested. Often, as with their arms clasped round each other they lay upon the soft carpet of grass, had they been heard to talk of the angels, whose wings they saw in the clouds, which, parted by light gales, floated away in the blue heaven, high above the dark green summit of the wood. They have been seen to smile,—yes, sometimes to talk confidentially and child-like with them, praise their beauty, which (as they said) was far greater than their own. Often did they raise their small child voices to accompany the tones of heavenly harps, which they heard mingled

with the voices of the wood. Their mother, who was always near them, believed in the reality of these appearances. And what, indeed, can one say against them?—that one has not oneself experienced anything of the kind. But how rarely was any one so angel-like and happy as Edward and Ellna!

Every one who knew them was obliged to acknowledge that they had never seen their like; and many a one questioned in pious rapture, whether these children were really like other mortals.

Around their white foreheads fell light-brown curls; like stars beamed forth their eyes below, in soft magical brightness. The charming smiles of childhood parted constantly their lovely lips, and formed in the rose-tinted cheeks little dimples, which people, I know not rightly why, so gladly kissed.

Their whole bodies were so beautifully formed, their hands in particular were so perfect, that I once saw how a sculptor fell into rapture over their contemplation; and how an old gardener, not otherwise distinguished for his politeness and fine breeding, borrowed a pair of gloves that he might be able to conduct the little Ellna about his garden, the most beautiful flowers of which soon lay in her muslin apron.

Accustomed therefore to be admired without knowing why, Edward and Ellna showed themselves gladly to every one who wished to see them, and quietly smiling, allowed themselves to be praised and caressed.

"We are so beautiful," said they in their innocence, without knowing what beauty was, and that the world considered the possession of this a piece of good fortune. The agreeable impression which, as they knew, they made, seemed, however, to give them pleasure, but only because it was so agreeable to others.

"Look at us!" said they to an old man, who wept the loss of his only son—"look at us, and weep no more!"

Accustomed to call forth a smile upon all countenances, they betrayed astonishment that any one could see them and yet weep, and in their grief, not to be able to give satisfaction, they began also to weep with him. That which their smiles could not do, they now effected by their tears. The old man took them in his arms, and felt himself refreshed, as

by the sympathy of angels. They were then heard to say to the mourner, "Look at us, we weep with you!"

Thus did these little Christians already in childhood follow the example of their Master.

People call children good. I declare that I have seen few which were not severe and cruel. Unthinking (therefore innocent) savages, they often torment in the most horrible manner creatures which are small and defenceless enough to become their victims. They curiously contemplate their convulsive movements amid torture, and rarely avoid causing them pain. O that so many people, who already know, who have already experienced themselves what pain is, should resemble these cruel little ones! They are not like them—innocent!

Often have I exclaimed with murmuring pain on the observation of their cruel pleasures, and the torments which their so-called necessary wants, their desire of knowledge, their inhumanity causes to millions of innocent creatures—"Man, this being that more than all suffers on the earth, and causes most suffering—O why was he created?"

Yet I know that all will be good one day,—no more tears will be shed—there will be no more pain. Humbling my head, I will quietly hope and wait for that higher light which is here denied to us. There is a God; therefore let the murmurs of man be silent!

Edward and Ellna were not cruel, as the children of earth are commonly. They knew not, however, what suffering, what pain, were; but it was as if they had a presentiment of it, and their most earnest endeavours were used, when they saw its horrible expression, to render help, and to alleviate it. If a poor worm crawled in the dust, hunted forth by ants, it was immediately released by their hands, placed upon the soft grass in safety, where there were no ants. Whenever they saw a little bird which, accustomed to the freedom of the woods, with ineffectual flutterings struck its little head against the iron wire of its cage, the tears came to their eyes, they besought for its release; and if their prayers were indeed in vain, they put together their hoarded pence and purchased it. Then it went out in the field with the happy little ones. The door of its cage was opened; and when the little emancipated one, amid exultant twitterings, described

circle within circle above their heads, then did the children clap their hands, and their hearts beat loudly with delight.

Not a day passed on which they did not operate against something which was bad, or for that which was good. To be sure the sphere of the children's activity was but small, and that which they could do but unimportant. They were young artists, who early accustomed themselves to the beautiful and noble parts which they were later to play upon the great theatre of the world.

As for the nests, in the robbing and plundering of which boys often find pleasure in the bold and cruel exercise of their strength, Edward and Ellna supplied provision. They laid this at the foot of the trees or hedges, where the little airy families had built their summer-dwellings. "The mother need not now fly so far," said they, "and her little ones need not wait and be famished!" They approached the places carefully, where the mother had bedded her eggs in the grass, silently scattered corn, and were very careful not to terrify the timid bird, which often by degrees, accustomed to the visits of the little angels, only flew off twittering, set itself upon a bush near, and waited quietly the going-away of the children, who joyfully, and not a little thankful for this proof of confidence, stole away so softly and lightly that the grass rose again under their footsteps as if it had only been bowed by soft breezes.

In order that they might not tread upon ants, which always streamed across the path on journeys of business, or upon frogs which hopped before their feet, the children remained standing, or made a little circuit. They never intentionally killed an animal, nor a fly, nor even a gnat, those Parias of the air, which find no mercy from the educated part of the human race. "It is really so delightful to live!" said the amiable little ones. I once even saw the little Ellna give up her white arms and hands as prey to these rapacious bloodsuckers. "I give them their suppers," said she, smiling; "and—it does not hurt me much," added she for the sake of her brother, who now, for the first time, showed the somewhat imperious temper of the man, and forbade his sister to do this again, if she did not wish that he should extirpate the whole race of gnats, which probably did

not seem more difficult to him than the conquest of the world to Alexander.

Ellna was obliged to submit. The gnats were chased away, and then Edward endeavoured by kisses to prevent the bitten places from swelling. The fresh smiles of childhood beamed from their countenances as they thus sportively contended, Edward to give kisses, and Ellna to avoid them.

I said that they never intentionally killed an animal,—I was wrong. If they saw a little creature tortured by the pangs of death, a fly or a moth, which had burned themselves in the candle, a trodden, but yet living worm, then Edward, as the least tender-hearted, hastened, with averted eyes and compassionate foot, the moment when pangs and pains would vanish.

"It is better to die than to suffer," said they, and turned away with pale faces.

"These children are too good for this earth," said those who knew them; "they certainly will not live long."

And yet, heavenly Father, it would be well amid so many pains, amid so much evil, if thou wouldest let these phenomena tarry longer here, which as it were reveal again to us the stars of which we have lost sight, which gently and refreshingly remind us of whence we are come, and whither we go.

You good and amiable mortals—when I wish that you should tarry here, I do so for our sakes, and not yours! If the All-merciful call back again to his bosom these sparks of his spirit, which have illumined and warmed the unworthy world for a moment—how well done is it of Him, how good for you!

The May-day of childhood was passed for Edward and Ellna,—their youth dawned. They counted fifteen years.

Their child-like mind, however, was not much changed. The first violet which looked forth from under the snow, the first strawberry which was reddened by the beams of the sun, still called forth the purple joy upon their cheeks; and the joy or the pain of their fellow-creatures drew from them now, as before, a smile or a tear. Only now they regarded more than formerly their fellow-beings as the worthiest objects of their care.

There was not within the compass of some miles a single cottage which they had not visited. The goodness of their

mother gave them unceasing opportunities of enjoying the blessed pleasure of benefiting their fellows. "Tell us what you need," said they to the poor and sick; "if we can, we will help you." Now there was a softer bed; now more healthy food; now a little support in money; now a petition on behalf of the indigent, which, always accompanied by gentle, kind words, spoken by two of the sweetest voices, made as deep as beneficial an impression. When help was not necessary, they sought at least to prepare a little pleasure; little presents were given to the parents, confections to the children, who of all the benefits most highly prize those which are conferred upon their sugar-loving gums; all these young lovers of noise and sweetmeats always attended on and saluted Edward and Ellna with loud cries of joy.

People warned their mother of the manner in which so much goodness might be abused. She replied, "Do not let us be too anxious. One single opportunity to do good which is lost, as is often the case from mistrust, is an irreparable loss. I acknowledge that we are often deceived by others from want of prudence; but with too much prudence we deceive ourselves. And then—if you only knew that which I feel when I hear every mouth blessing my children!"

If people would rightly thank Edward and Ellna according to their wishes, it were thus that they must speak to them: "I am now better, my pains are alleviated;" or, "I am now more joyful, and happier;" or, "God is good, he will not allow us to despair;" then were their hearts filled with the purest joy, and they thanked their Maker.

In the mean time their happy endeavours, their charitable cares, were not extended alone to the poor and the less educated classes of the people; they sought to assuage not merely the care which weeps, the suffering which expresses itself aloud, the silent sorrow, the consuming unrest, those small but insupportable afflictions which people do not willingly confess, but which are so painful,—all those adverse circumstances which hang like chains about the slaves of the polite and educated world, they imagined, and endeavoured with compassionate hands to lighten. One look, which in an unwatchful moment betokened a depressed heart,—one gesture, one movement, which betrayed embarrassment—a consequence mostly of uneasiness of mind,—seldom escaped

their eyes ; and they always discovered some means to make at least a few moments agreeable to those who seemed to be deprived of peace and satisfaction of heart.

When Ellna saw in society a sister-being to whom nature had dealt hardly, and who, in one way or another, seemed to betray the painful consciousness that she was unpleasing, she sought immediately to become acquainted with her ; she went towards her, caressed her, and endeavoured in all ways to convince her that she found her loveable, and that she was gladly in company with her. Edward also came immediately to her assistance ; and the attentiveness with which he offered a thousand of those little favours which one can never demand, but which are received with so much pleasure,—his unconstrained lively politeness,—made, in connexion with the charming friendliness of the sister, an irresistible impression. If, on the other hand, Edward saw a youth who was neglected, or overlooked, or dejected, he always tried to get into conversation with him immediately. If they danced, he introduced his sister Ellna, who in the goodness of her heart preferred him to all the rich, handsome, and elegant young gentlemen who sought for one of her beaming glances.

How often have I seen countenances which betrayed minds depressed, displeased, or embittered, clear themselves up under the influence of the twins, and by degrees reflect back their gentle and beaming smiles. Plain features became thereby beautified, and one read long afterwards, in their more agreeable expression, “ We can nevertheless be found to be amiable ! ”

One evening, at a dance in the open air, I perceived that Ellna had no longer a little bouquet which her brother had made for her out of the loveliest flowers of the garden. I asked her whether she had lost it. “ I have given it away,” replied she, reddening, and left me to dance at the same moment. I looked curiously around me among the young and loveable persons of the ball ; no one had Ellna’s little bouquet. Afterwards I perceived, upon a bench which stood at some distance, a deformed, feeble being, whose limbs were all twisted ; he held Ellna’s flowers in his emaciated hand, and repeated softly, with an expression of devotion, “ The angel ! —the angel ! ” she thought, she said, that flowers would do me good ; yes, they **do** me good,—O what an angel ! ”

How happy they were, these young, so lovely and so good, brother and sister; how worthy of love they were, and how much beloved! People prided themselves on them in the whole country, just as they pride themselves on the gifts which nature has bestowed on the country or neighbourhood which we call our own, and of which we are so proud. People call them the angels; and, in fact, when one saw them, when one heard their melodious voices united in a simple song of praise in honour of the Creator, one could forget everything else, and for some moments fancy oneself in heaven.

The tenderness which twin-children commonly cherish for each other, was so deep, so inward, between Edward and Ellna, that I fancy they had scarcely a notion of an existence apart from each other. They thought, they acted together; they always said *we*; they felt only their *I* in each other; this *I*, which, when it is felt quite alone in oneself, is so heavy, so painful a burden.

The beautiful life of the twins had hitherto flowed on without a cloud. No sickness, no care, no disaster, had cast one shadow on their pure brows. Life, which otherwise is so severe a teacher, seemed to hold her children in honour, and, for the first time, as if she could not be stern. Each new day brought with it something to beautify them. Their countenances became more oval, and took ever more and more the lovely Grecian form. Their figures increased in more beautiful pliability, like two young trees which have entwined their crowns together. Their smiles were fuller of expression, and the goodness of their hearts beamed ever clearer forth from their large blue eyes.

People approached these favourites of Heaven and men almost with adoration; people could have offered sacrifices to them; and yet, if one would contribute anything to their happiness, one must receive something from them. It was to me as if I saw in them young priests at the altar of Mercy, who imparted with humility the gifts of the divinity.

Their mother,—so much has been said, perhaps all that can be said in words, of maternal love and maternal felicity, but the love and felicity of this mother cannot be described by words, can, perhaps, only be compared to the felicity of the mother who saw the most holy glory of Heaven around the head of her son.

At the age of sixteen, they stood in the full bloom of earthly, and at the same time, of celestial beauty. The world opened itself to them full of joy, love, and happiness. Before them lay a light, flower-strewn, peaceful way, upon which they could wander together, beloved and loving in return, happy and making happy. They could be the benefactors and examples to their fellow-creatures ; they could be so, and yet they could not,—at the age of sixteen they must die !

At the beginning of winter, Edward's Apollo-countenance began to burn with a hectic crimson, which kindled up and dyed his youthful cheeks with brighter red ; but which, in the course of a few hours, faded like a feeble flame, and left behind the paleness of death. His strength began to fail, his beautiful slender figure bent forward like a tender young tree which has been bowed by the storm ; his breath became short ; his hitherto so ardent movements slow and languid, and his eyes had a clearness which promised the speedy lighting up of the whole being. The opinion of the physician was this—Consumption, and only yet a few months to live.

O now, how was everything changed ! As he approached the grave, Edward looked around him upon life, that seemed passed away from his eyes like his native shore from the sight of the seaman.

" I am so young," said he, amid deep sighs ; " and must die already ! I shall leave thee, Ellna—must part from thee and our mother ! And this beautiful life, this charming earth, good people, all, all I must leave, and die ! O the dark grave, wherein I shall be laid alone—how horrible ! "

Everything that Ellna said and did had alone for its object consolation and alleviation for her brother. And nevertheless she was so wholly unhappy ; but she never thought of herself.

She said to Edward, " The sun has a wonderful power, my brother ; come to the window, and let it shine on thee ; see, here is a soft chair ; here are lilies of the valley, which I have fetched for thee ; enjoy their delightful odour ; they send, especially in winter, presentiments of spring over all our feelings." Or she said, " Rest on me, my brother ; thus thou wilt sit comfortably, and I will not stir." And with her brother's head on her breast she sate whole hours immovable there, taking pains to keep time with his breathing,

and to repress the uneasy beating of her heart. Another time she said, "Dost thou see how the clouds divide, how the heavens clear themselves up? It opens, as it were, and beams so mildly and blue above us. It is the answer of the All-good to my prayer, which I just now fervently put up to Him. The heaven of our happiness has dimmed itself—it will clear up again—thou wilt not die!"

Sometimes she sought also to awaken hope in his and her own breast, by jest and sport. She danced before him, threw playfully around him the light scarf which her hands wreathed in a thousand graceful forms around her own ethereal figure. She sang to him those little ballads and songs which life so easily takes hold of, and makes it also easy to those who listen to their attractive tones. But when only a feeble smile, a melancholy reflection of the former blissful one, appeared on Edward's pale lips, then suddenly were extinguished all beams of hope in Ellna's eyes, and the twins wept together.

Often did she encourage him to make use of those means for the renewal of life's strength which, particularly in consumption, are resorted to, in order that the weak thread of life may not too suddenly be torn asunder. All these she prepared with her own hand. Who can number all that her inventive love discovered, to procure for him alleviation and amusement? Without the knowledge of her brother, she held her hands in ice-cold water, that she might afterwards cool his burning forehead as she laid them upon it. When she watched by his bed through sleepless nights, she read aloud to him, and told him such things as she thought would best please his then state of mind; for his state of mind was, as is the case with consumptive patients, unsteady and changeable. And in those gloomy moments in which Edward shuddered at the prospect of dying so young, and being alone—for he could not conceive to himself that he should not miss his sister in the grave—then Ellna would promise to follow him. "How could I do otherwise?" added she; "I really feel my life in thine!"

Yes, she could console;—and what woman, what true woman cannot? I ought, perhaps, seeing that I myself am a woman, to be more modest,—but if I believe it, if I express it, it is because I love,—and because, although I cannot turn aside the stroke of fate from the beings who are dear to

me, I have set the hope of my whole life on alleviating it. Yes, I believe it is *we* alone who can solve the enigma of pain in its least parts ; and that it is given alone to *us*, in the inspiration of feeling and of love, to have a presentiment of the evil which pain occasions, of that which is concealed in the gnawing disease of the sick. I hope and believe, and let nobody gainsay me, that as in the beginning of time, the genius of evil sowed poisonous seed in the flower-garden of creation, still that a mitigating balsam was placed by the All-good in the hands of woman, which could make the power of these less operative.

Ellna had said to Edward, “I will follow thee!”—and she soon followed him. The same symptoms of disease showed themselves at the beginning of the spring in her, and the mischief made rapid progress in her tender frame, weakened by disquiet and night-watching.

To her the sentence of death was also announced by an honest and candid physician, who feared, above all things, to add new troubles to what was already incurable by fruitless attempts at recovery.

“We are so young, and yet we must, indeed, die!” said now Edward and Ellna, painfully. But this *we*, that united them, was already a drop of comfort in the bitter cup.

They took leave together of the flowers of spring, took leave of every day which unmercifully dragged away with it a drop of their life’s strength. People saw them often, as, supported on each other, they wandered about with feeble steps and sorrowful looks in the wood, in the fields, in the groves, where they had once played so happily ; they took leave of everything ; of the earth, even of heaven, which seemed, however, only so glorious to them, because it arched itself above an earth which was a paradise to them.

“Farewell, everything which we have loved!” said they ; “we must leave all, we must soon die!”

When people spoke in their presence of future enjoyments, or of future good deeds, with the intention to amuse them, or, as it were, to enlarge the view, which an approaching night shut in ever more narrowly—they said, with tearful eyes, “We shall not be there ; we must die!”

“Come to me in the autumn,” said one of their neighbours, “when my grapes and peaches are ripe, and there

shall be served-up to you an actual angel's entertainment."

"In autumn we cannot come," returned they,—"in autumn we shall be no more."

"Next month," said a lively old gentleman, who was their friend, "my grandchildren, Alfred and Signild, come to me. They are good and beautiful; not, indeed, like the angels, but, believe my spectacles and my heart, not far, not very far from it. Alfred shall be Ellna's husband; and the little Signild, who is the apple of my eye, Edward shall have for his wife. Quick and merry, like the chain in the quadrille, shall all go on in a twinkling,—falling in love, betrothal, and marriage. And a little kingdom of heaven one shall then find here."

"Ah!" replied the angels, sorrowfully smiling, "we cannot be married, we must really die!"

And in all ways, and from all sides, came this death towards them sternly and severely, forbidding and disturbing all joy, and changing everything into twilight and night.

And yet they must learn to love this death, which appeared to them so fearful.

Pain—the condition of life, and the terrible side of life—which hitherto had not ventured to approach these angelic beings, struck now its hyæna-claws into their breast.

I had heard them say "we must die!" with an expression that bewailed "we must leave the festival!" Soon afterwards I heard them speak the same words, but in a tone which expressed, "we shall soon repose!"

Thank Heaven, this time of suffering was of short duration; repose came before the grave, and only a slow, almost painless wasting away, led them unobservedly down to the shore of life, where they might still gather a few flowers.

In the mean time they had suffered, gained experience, and from before their eyes vanished the fading prism which had clothed the whole world with purple.

They looked around them, and the paradise had vanished,—they saw tears, crimes, sufferings, circumstances of terror, for the alleviation of which they stretched out their feeble hands in vain. Human misery, with whose signification they were now first acquainted, raised itself like a dark image of hor-

for, and spread a veil of mourning over the whole beautiful earth.

"People suffer," said they, "animals suffer; all that breathe suffer, or must suffer—it is not good to be here—this is the home of suffering!" and they no longer wished to live—except, thought they, to be able to console a little and to help. "But that which we can do is really so very little!" and a melancholy glance of thought embraced the globe.

About this time a good, enlightened clergyman began to give them instructions in the religion to which they were baptized. In their angelically pure souls sprang up the heavenly seed, and bore a hundred-fold, as if in the good earth of which the Gospel speaks.

Their looks brightened by degrees with the increase of the light within them; they were often, it is true, cast down upon the earth, and they sighed, "This world is not good!" but they soon raised them beaming to heaven in the joyful feeling, "there is a better world!"

The night which had encompassed them for a time, became ever brighter and brighter, and glorious was the path which opened itself to them in the splendour of a celestial light. Thither they directed their looks, thither all their hopes, all their desires. Presentiments of eternity penetrated them, and as they looked upon each other with a blessed smile, they whispered, "We are immortal."

When they, for the first time, had enjoyed the holy communion, peace alone was in their hearts, and the beam of their eyes was only a faint reflection of their inward brightness.

One anxiety, one only one, remained to them still, and this often expressed itself softly amid sweet tears, when they knelt adoringly before the eternal Fountain of Life; "O Father," said they, "if thy love, thy power should sometime penetrate and surround us with brightness, like this glorious image of thee, how—how shall we be able to thank thee?"

So passed the summer, whilst the angels, cheerfully and submissively, resigned day by day, flower by flower, the crown of life.

Autumn approached—with it, at the same time, the earthly

transfiguration of the twins. The nights passed for them sleeplessly. When it was possible, they passed them in the open air, where their oppressed lungs breathed more freely, and the moist coolness mitigated the fever that burned in their blood.

Whilst the August nights mildly and peacefully wrapped slumbering nature in mournful twilight, there burned in the souls of the dying brother and sister the clear torches of hope and of joy.

I have heard them, those words; I have seen them, those looks, full of immortality—for which there already existed no longer any night. And afterwards, for a long time, everything in life seemed to me pale and colourless.

Autumn was come. Feebly sank the lovely heads of the twins upon the cushions which were placed around them on the sofa, from which they were never more able to rise. Those who loved them, now counted the seconds.

Suffering themselves, Ellna and Edward sought, nevertheless, to comfort and to enliven the mourners whom they must leave. “We will watch over you,” said they, “when we are angels,—we will entreat God for you.”

They looked farewell upon all when they were no more able to speak; and when their weary eyelids closed, they blissfully smiled.

Towards the last, however, a troubling disquiet crept into their hearts. They feared that they might not die at the same time—might not pass away together to that home of light, of peace, and of joy, for which they alone longed.

Sitting near to each other, they watched, with secret anguish in each other’s countenance, the progress of the disease. “How brightly beam thy eyes!” said Edward to Ellna. “Thy countenance has no longer anything earthly in it. It seems to me as if thou couldst spread forth glittering wings every morning, and float forth into the clear heaven, far, far from me!” And catching her round the waist, he pressed her to his heart with all the power of his feeble strength. Another time it was Ellna who said with a trembling voice, “Edward, how sunken are thy cheeks, how dim thy eyes! Oh, look at me! look at me! Thy breath becomes weaker—it ceases! Let me give to thee of mine—I have yet enough for us both.” And seizing the head of her

brother with her weak hand, she endeavoured, amid kisses, to communicate some of the feeble breath of life which she felt in her own breast.

Thus did the dying brother and sister endeavour to hold back, as it were, each other, whilst they felt how they were rapidly led forward by a mighty, invisible hand.

Friends, acquaintance, all who had known and loved the angels, assembled around them. As if to an altar, everything which people thought pleasant and gladdening, was brought into their sick room. They did not give them, no, they offered to them, as it were, flowers, fruits, together with heartfelt wishes—honest tears—which were received by the twins with grateful smiles, and this promise—“ We will soon pray for you !”

They placed harps in the room adjoining the sick chamber, and often played and sung them into quiet slumber. When people contemplated them in those moments when the soul had taken a freer flight into the spiritual land of dreams, wanting no longer time and space, but floating forth over wondrous lands, having a presentiment of their future free and beautiful existence—then they saw, in the indescribable expression of their calm features, that they were removed far, far from the earth, and that for them the eternity of bliss had already arrived.

In the evening, they sometimes said to each other, with gentle smiles, “ Shall we awake to-morrow in heaven ?”

During a tempestuous October night, sleep descended unusually quietly and mildly upon the loving angels. Counting every stroke of the clock, the mother and her friends watched in the quiet room.

“ How well they sleep !” whispered they who ventured to speak. “ It strikes twelve. See how they smile in delightful dreams ! The morning dawns,—they yet sleep. The storm has ceased—heaven brightens—the day breaks beautifully,—yet they sleep. Hark ! they sigh. Or was it the wind which passes the window ?”

The sun ascended, caressingly shone the golden beams on the angel-faces of the twins. They sleep no longer. They were awake—but in heaven ! Pure flames, kindled from the same spark, which had burned together ; now also are they extinguished here upon earth at the same time !

They had been earthly angels, they are now heavenly; and when an unexpected consolation, an unexpected joy refreshes one who is troubled and cast down, he says, “*They have prayed for me.*”

And their mother, their poor mother?

Do you see, by the wall of the churchyard, that female figure, which sits there upon a stone, as immovable as it? Negligently fall down upon her shoulders locks of grey hair—the wind plays with her tattered garments. She is old and stiff, but not merely through the influence of years. Do not pass coldly by—give her your sympathy—she will not much longer trouble you. Look at her crutches, at her dimmed eyes, at the pain of her silent mouth. Why does she sit here? Because she cannot be anywhere else. She is where her heart also tarries, by the grave of her children. Grief for them has troubled the light of her eyes and of her reason. She does not observe how the leaves of autumn fall around her—she feels not when the winds of spring melt the snow upon the grave,—but every day she goes there, and the summer’s heat and the winter’s cold find her alike unconscious. No one whom she knows speaks to her, and she speaks to no one. She has, nevertheless, an object; she waits—for what?—for death! Through the course of many years has she seen the graves around her open and receive weary wanderers to their quiet peaceful bosom—but she still sits a dead one among the dead, and waits.

April 1st.

Be ye saluted by me, mild breezes, which melt away the winter-snow; be thou saluted, bright spring-sun, which penetrates with warmth and life the dust of the grave! From the home of the dead, from the still churchyard, have I to-day saluted life. I love this peaceful place, where the unquiet, throbbing heart, where everything, comes to repose. I also feel in a breast, which has not been able to wait the time, the unquiet captive, which now in pain, now in joy, throbs so restlessly and violently, and it does me good when I can think that a time will come, when *mine* also will be among the reposing hearts.

The larks sang in the clear air above the trees, on the grave of the twins. There sate, as before, the mother still and immovable upon a stone. A whistling wind passed over

the churchyard, I saw a shudder thrill through her frame. I approached her, she bowed her head against one of the lime-trees on the grave, and still smiled. I saw with joy, that also her time of trial was at an end—that she waited no longer!

You beautiful flowers of the spring, now where the May sun calls you forth out of the renovated earth, cover and brilliantly adorn the grave, which will no longer be moistened with bitter maternal tears!

Lovely lilies of the valley, soft periwinkle, grow upon the hillock—

Even as the scar grows over the closed wound!—*Tegnér.*

PREFACE TO TRÄLINNAN

(THE BONDMAID).

A BELOVED friend, to whom I would communicate my warm interest in the Northern Legends of the Gods, read aloud with me, during solitary autumn evenings in the country, a learned disquisition upon them. Her countenance continued steadfastly cloudy and dissatisfied during the whole, and when she came to the words—"Loke, found the half-roasted heart of a woman," she flung the book vehemently from her and exclaimed,—"Nay! I can bear this no longer! It is too monstrous! too disgusting! It makes me actually ill!"

"And yet," I zealously interposed—"I assure you there is much and deep meaning in this mythology, and the greatest interest, if we——"

"That may be," interrupted my friend somewhat impatiently, "but to comprehend it, I promise you I must take another method. Do you write something about this meaning that you consider so deep, and then I shall see whether I can comprehend or endure it."

The challenge was accepted with laughter; the execution of it drew forth tears,—for the misery and the darkness of the past arose, and was felt as present. Three days after our little conversation, the BONDMAIDEN was written; and I proposed to read it aloud to my friend, while by way of prologue I said, "I have here endeavoured to collect into one tangible picture what our forefathers believed respecting gods and men, about life and death, heaven and hell, as well as earthly things. In the dawn of the world, as in that of the day, we see first the shadows of night still rest on the earth, yet at the same time we behold the morning red of the eternal truth, and herald of the sun, in whose light our race has acquired light, and the slave his freedom." My friend listened to my prologue in silence, and I commenced my reading.

It is always a hard matter to go through with, as my friend, whenever I begin to read to her any of my compositions, is sure to begin mercilessly to gape. I say "to go through with," because I have found that if the article rivet her attention, which heaven knows is not always the case, the gapings quickly disappear, and give place to most lively and enchanting sympathy. As now, therefore, with a secret glance at my friend, I began to read aloud "the Bondmaiden," and with a dreadful feeling saw her let one undisguised yawn follow another, I pretended not in the least to perceive it, but read on, and soon beheld, to my great consolation, the mouth close itself, and the eyes and ears become profoundly attentive. The result of the reading was, nevertheless, but little edifying.

"Ah, my poor soul!" said my friend with a deep sigh, "that truly was no amusing history! For your Krumba, or Tumba, or Katakumba, is too hideous; and then the conclusion—ah! it is horribly tiresome altogether!"

I defended my Bondmaiden the best that I could, at the same time observing that her name was Kumba, and not either Tumba or Katakumba. My friend's last words were, "It may be very true that she is beautiful. I would willingly wish to believe so; but I beg to be excused liking her. There is interest enough about her; but the conclusion, the conclusion!"

The Bondmaid continued a good while after this in silence, undergoing, the while, first one and then another change, but still without being able to win my friend's favour. I have now resolved to make the public, from whose decision, as from that of God himself, there is no appeal, the judge between us; and to hear what it says of the Bondmaiden. My friend assures me, that no one can desire more cordially than she, that "Katakumba"—she has perversely taken a determined whim to call my Bondmaiden thus—may be admired and I protest to my friend, that no one can more heartily chime in with her desire than

THE AUTHORESS.

TRÄLINNAN:

A SKETCH FROM THE OLDEN TIME.

PERSONS.

FRID, King's Daughter, betrothed to King Dag.

KUMBA, } Bondmaids.
FEIMA,

GRIMGERDA, a Sorceress.

A Spirit of Light.

A Spirit of Darkness.

The Scene is a woody mountain region. Amongst the rocks rises the Castle of
a Viking. On one side is the Sea; on the other a Flower-Garden.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The Flower Garden. FEIMA binds up flowers to their supports. KUMBA waters them.

FRID. The morning is delicious and clear. Yet glitters in the grass the honey-dew from the Mima tree. The Nornor sprinkle its crown with water from the sacred fountain, and let it softly rain down in heavenly sweetness over the flowers and leaves of the field. The bee sucks it from the bosom of the flowers, and then bestows the precious juice on man, which is delicious both to the sick and the sound. How beautiful, how rich, is Nature, how full of wisdom are all her arrangements! How great is the goodness of God, who shaped the earth for mankind like a cup filled with honey! Brightly advances the sun on his hero path. Receive my greeting, thou illuminator of spirits; thou at whose fire spirits of light and spirits of darkness assemble themselves affectionately to prepare the golden harvest of the earth! Here all burns, here all rejoices in the splendour of the All-Father's eye! The All-Father is light, is fire. Love, too, is fire, is an animated flame sprung from the All-Father's bosom. O Sun! thou, the image of his person; thou, warm and glorious as love; I bow myself in adoration before thee, and pray thee to protect a flame as pure and powerful as thine. A beam of thy fire kindle thou in the eyes of King Dag; it burns yet more beautifully in

his heart ; he is the descendant of a divine race ; —protect him ; illumine his voyage over the great sea ! Make his path light, his arm strong and victorious ! Conduct him home to the court of his fathers, to his faithful bride ; and, kneeling by his side, I will consecrate to thee a better offering than now, thou glorious king of day ! (*She approaches KUMBA and FEIMA.*) Bond-maidens, it is good ! The flower-garden is well tended. The beauty of the plants gladdens both eye and heart. Soon, too, will King Dag see it, and reward your care. He has commissioned me to give you a testimony of his favour. He will one day give you more beautiful ones himself. Feima, take this silver chain. Thou shalt wear it on thy wedding-day. The same sun which blesses my union with King Dag shall witness thy marriage with thy faithful Hreimer. He shall be my master-gardener. The cottage, which I have caused to be built for you, will soon be completed. I wish you always to remain with me and the king. Thou shalt brew the mead for our wedding ; and thou wilt do well, Feima, to call the good Disor to thy aid, that it may be clear and strong.

FEIMA. (*Falls down and kisses FRID's feet. FRID extends to her her hand.*) Princess ! thy favour is great ! We will live and die for thee ! How beautiful is thy hand ; how white, how silken. Only King Dag has hands as beautiful as thine !

FRID. More beautiful, Feima, because they are stronger. Kumba, thou art the most favoured of my attendants. From the years of childhood have we been together. Thou shalt always be near me. Take this golden ring.

KUMBA. King's daughter, that is not for me.

FRID. I give it thee.

KUMBA. My hand is brown ; my fingers are short and bony—what shall the golden ring do there ? It does not become me. Retain thy gift. Thy favour is all that I desire.

FRID. O, very well ! I will keep my ring, but—till thy wedding-day. I know that Klur loves thee. Thou wilt not always be hard with him. He shall put the ring on thy finger. (*KUMBA turns away.*) If thou hast a wish, thou shalt tell it me, that I may gratify it. I desire that all should be happy. Ah ! see, see here reddens a rosebud ! Welcome, thou little harbinger of the highest happiness ! (*Kisses*

it.) Kumba! Feima! tend it well. Protect it from the night chill; moisten its root with the clearest water. "When the rosebuds redden, then shall I be near thee!" wrote last to me, King Dag. This rose is the first which reddens this year in the flower-garden. Perhaps when this flower opens, shall my life's happiness be in bloom. Tend well the delicate bud, bondmaidens! Ye shall not do it in vain. Kumba, in about an hour I shall expect thee to attend me to the bath.

KUMBA. I will be punctual.

FRID. Once more—take care of my rosebud. [She goes.

SCENE II.—KUMBA. FEIMA.

FEIMA. How good she is!

KUMBA. She is happy!

FEIMA. How beautiful she is, and proud! Well is she worthy to be beloved by a king like King Dag. Kumba! What art thou doing? Thou breakest off the bud which she bade us cherish!

KUMBA. She can have so many others.

FEIMA. O Kumba! that was ill done. Ought not her slightest wish to have been a law to thee? She, thy lady, thy benefactress!

KUMBA. I am her slave!

FEIMA. And yet is she so gracious, so condescending to thee! Fie! Kumba!

KUMBA. Reproach me not. My mind is embittered. I will die!

FEIMA. Die! Wherfore?

KUMBA. I am a slave!

FEIMA. And has one of our race ever been treated better than thou? Has not the king's daughter exempted thee from laborious occupations? Hast thou not from childhood been allowed to be near her, and treated better than all the servants? Does she not give thee better clothes, better food? Dost thou not go freely about in the royal halls? Hast thou not there been instructed in much that thralls are not wont to know?

KUMBA. Feima! Why dost thou call me fortunate? Call me unfortunate! Why was I not left in the humble cottage, with poverty and hardship, and taught by custom to endure

the stern lot to which I was born? Why did the bondmaid receive a dwelling in the halls of kings, and learn to compare? Why did I learn to love beauty and greatness, when my lot was ugliness and insignificance? Why did I receive instructions which taught me only to despair?

FEIMA. Ah! it was thy proud heart which taught thee to feel thus! It is thy haughty spirit which converts the sweetness into poison!

KUMBA. Frid too is proud, and yet in her that is no fault!

FEIMA. No! for pride becomes her; but pride does not become us. She is of the race of the Jarls; we of that of the Thralls.

KUMBA. And yet, Feima, the Saga says, that the father of our race was a god—yes, the same god who afterwards became the father of the haughty race of the gods. We are the elder brethren and sisters. Why are we suffered to creep in the dust, when the younger brethren are exalted to God's heaven?

FEIMA. I do not know. But this I know, that it would not befit thee to wear Frid's crown on thy head, her golden girdle around thy waist, and to walk so slowly and proudly as she does. I feel that I could not help laughing at that.

KUMBA. Woe is me! I know it too. In me that were ridiculous, which in her is beautiful. I am called, and I am, Kumba.* But it is precisely of that that I complain. Why am I so?

FEIMA. And I know too that there are much good and many joys for us if we can but bridle our minds and our desires. Have we not the sun's light and warmth? Have we not the fragrance of flowers as well as the king's daughter? Have we not the enjoyment of the cottage which protects us; of food which we eat? Can we not, under the guardianship of good masters, possess husbands and children as well as the Jarls?

KUMBA. Slaves!

FEIMA. Hreimer is a slave; yes, and his hand is sunburnt, but diligent and faithful is that hand; his heart is good, and his glance tells me how dear he holds me. By his side I shall live happy and free from care, for we love one another, and we love our masters, and know that they will not sepa-

* Clumsy.

rate us, or sell our children away from us. We desire nothing better than always to live in their service.

KUMBA. Happy thou!

FEIMA. The same happiness may be thine if thou wilt; Klur loves thee.

KUMBA. Fie, fie, fie then! I speak not of him.

FEIMA. And if thou wilt not have a husband; if thou wilt remain single, what more pleasant lot canst thou have than to serve the noble Frid, and live in the royal halls, and see around thee men and women of the race of the Jarls? That, indeed, is great and beautiful.

KUMBA. Miserable! Know, Feima, farther towards the north, towards the region where giants and horrible dragons have their abode, there is found amid ice-clad mountains a people not far removed from beasts. Their clothes are the skins of wild beasts; their dwellings, caves and clefts of the rocks; their speech, a bestial noise. Well, then, amongst this people, in their woods, I should feel myself happier than here, in the halls of the king's daughter!

FEIMA. Thou wouldest prefer living amongst detestable monsters of the woods rather than with the good and beautiful Frid? Thou wouldest rather freeze in their caves, and hunt in their woods, than plait her golden hair and bathe in a silver ewer her white feet?

KUMBA. Yes, that would I.

FEIMA. Wonderful! And why?

KUMBA. Because there I should be free! Because amongst them I should be somewhat.

FEIMA. I do not understand thee. But if thou findest thyself so unhappy here, wherefore, Kumba, dost thou not make thy prayer to Frid for thy freedom? She loves thee, and could certainly not refuse thy request. Wherefore dost thou linger where thou art in torment?

KUMBA. Ask me not!

FEIMA. Thou art very strange. Thou wilt and thou wilt not.

KUMBA. Woe is me! It is so. My feet are rivetted to the spot which bears me.

FEIMA. Sister! poor sister! I compassionate thee!

KUMBA. Well mayest thou. But the powers who made the races of the Jarls and the slaves, who gave to the one

gold and to the other dust—of these will I demand, Was it
just that ye dealt thus?

FEIMA. Kumba, tempt not the gods!

KUMBA. They who require of men worship because they
conferred on them a wretched life—who demand praise and
offerings for the clod of earth which we cultivate with the
sweat of our brow for others—to them will I say, In your
unjust, selfish existence—

FEIMA. Silence! O silence! It is horrible to hear thee!
Thy eyes flash, Kumba! Thou blasphemest!

KUMBA. But if I do murmur and blaspheme in despair
over my lot, what then? In a little time I shall grow dumb
in the world—in a little time the blaspheming spirit will dis-
appear like a vapour in space, and be as it had never been.
But it has not disturbed the rejoicing songs of Valhalla;
aloft there is not heard its pain and complaint. And when
the achievements of the mighty shall live immortally in the
songs of the Scalds on the earth—when their glory shall be
admired by succeeding generations—who shall know any-
thing of the life of slaves, of their virtues, their sufferings?
Dumb, beneath the burden of their labours, they have sunk
into the earth, and are forgotten. Where is found justice for
them, in heaven or upon earth? We are born to no end.

FEIMA. Nay, that I cannot believe. Say not our holy
Sagas, that for us, too, shall be found room after death, there,
where every one shall receive his reward for what he has done
on the earth, whether it be good or evil?

KUMBA. Seest thou the pale grey cloud in the distance,
which sails over the wild heath? Seest thou, far off in the
marshes, the vapours tossed about by the wind? There
beholdest thou the life of a slave after death. Seest thou the
sun, how he warms the world from the inward glow of his own
happiness; the stars by night, beaming down tranquilly, as
kings from their thrones, as happy spirits in the courts of
the gods—there hast thou the immortality of the noble-born
of the hero-race. Dark is our life on the earth, dark on the
other side of the grave! It is not good to go poor to Odin—
the poor find in his halls no room. Alone for a nobly-born
hero, alone for a king who carried far and wide the blood-
dripping sword, resounds the road to Valhalla; for him only
~~are~~ adorned its couches, for him its cup is burnished, and the

Valkyrior bring wine. The joys of heaven are made only for the great, the happy on earth.

FEIMA. But it is said likewise, that the servant who comes in the train of a great lord can slip into the glorious Asgård; therefore, often do the servants of kings kill themselves on their master's corpse.

KUMBA. Fools! Yes, to become slaves to them after death as they have been here. "Wretches" are the slaves termed by the Scalds; and justly, for wretched is their lot even there, beyond Hela's nocturnal halls. Thraldom and fatigue await them there as here. And for those of us who do not accompany some mighty lord in death, there shall be no resurrection—we have here lived in vain.

FEIMA. Ah! my heart tells me different. It says that the gods will never forsake the being whom they have created.

KUMBA. Seest thou the worm in the sand which is tortured and dragged along by ants? See how it writhes, how it is agonized! Let it be! If thou rescuest it, a thousand others will still be tortured. In vain dost thou writhe, worm. Thy tormentors drag thee to the hillock, to the unhonoured funeral-pile, from which no glorifying flame ascends, and where thou shalt speedily become nothing. Is not the worm created by the gods as well as we? They regard not the worm; they look not down on us. Our fates are alike.

FEIMA. No, no! I would not believe that, if thou said it a thousand times. They who have served in truth shall certainly hereafter dwell in peace and joy. But, were it indeed not so, were it otherwise—

KUMBA. What then?

FEIMA. From the dust was I taken. The goodness of God gave me life. I have seen the beauty of the sun; I have enjoyed the fruits of the earth, the freshness of the water, the cool shade of the trees—I have loved. If the gods shall one day reduce to nothing the dust which they have raised up, I will then praise them for the life which I have enjoyed; and will deliver again into their hands what from their hands I have received, if not without regret, at least without complaining.

KUMBA. Shall I admire, or shall I despise thee?

FEIMA. We are small; let us in humility acknowledge it.

Humility is the soul's repose. O Kumba, Kumba! Leave thy proud thoughts—humble thyself. See, it is only by stooping that thou canst gather this beautiful flower. Quit the regal palace if thou art not happy there, but go not amongst the wild people. Come to us, sister; come and remain with us. Hreimer and I will love thee, cherish thee, perform the heaviest tasks for thee. Choose a husband, possess a cottage, and press a child to thy bosom. My mother has told me, that when she gave me birth the world became light to her, and that she would not have exchanged me for a kingdom. The animals, which are so much beneath us, how they love, how they rejoice themselves in their young! Become a wife and mother, Kumba! become good and happy.

KUMBA. The cradle and the bier are the seats of the Nornor, and no one can escape his fate. I will not give birth to a being doomed to unhappiness.

FEIMA. Hreimer and I are happy, and yet we are the children of slaves.

KUMBA. My mother was amongst the slaves of Queen Gunnild—she was the most faithful of her servants. Poor and heavy was her lot, yet did she wish to live. My father was a free-born person, who thought little of forsaking the woman who loved him, and the child she had born to him. I remember a night—that night has stretched itself over my whole life. Flames arose from a pile—they ascended high into heaven. It was the corpse of the queen which was burned. My mother was amongst those who tended the pile; she, with many others, were cast alive into the flames! The queen, it was said, needed her attendants in the other world. I stood amongst the people, still a child, and heard my mother's cry, and saw her burn. Fatherless and motherless, I went thence into the world alone, and wandered in the woods without knowing whither. There came people, who seized me, and carried me back to the court of King Atle. They said that I wished to run away, and I was conducted to the presence of the king. I answered haughtily to his questions, and he caused me to be whipped till the blood came, in punishment, as he said, of my disobedience. Thou, Feima, then lay on thy mother's bosom—thou didst not understand what I felt.

FEIMA. But Frid, King Atle's beautiful niece, understood

it. She begged thee from the king, and cherished thee like a mother, although she was scarcely older than thyself. She endeavoured to recompense thee for all that thou hadst suffered.

KUMBA. Then did I sit in the nights, and gazed on the wandering stars, on the flying clouds. I asked them of my mother's fate; I called her name, and listened. The night wind flew complaining over the heath, and the fog bedewed me with tears. See, there, the only answer that I received.

FEIMA. O canst thou not forget the horrors of thy childish years in all the kindness which has been showered on thy youth? And what dost thou know? Perhaps thy mother's soul lies happily in the sunshine which now closes thee in its warm embrace. O that it would become light in thy soul, and that thou couldst see life and thy own destiny in a clearer vision! It is long since thou hast offered to the gods. Come, sister, come! Let us go to the holy fountain of offering on the mountain. Dost thou see this silver-penny? I received it once from King Dag. I will now offer this for thee. Carry thou also thither an offering of something dear to thee, that we may win the favour of the Powers, and that they may hear our prayers.

KUMBA. And what wouldest thou that I should solicit?

FEIMA. A pious, a contented mind.

KUMBA. Am I then so wicked, Feima?

FEIMA. Sister, pardon me the hard word;—thou art not good.

KUMBA. Thou speakest the truth. But, Feima, I have wished to be good. O! had the gods heard my sighs, Feima, I should now have been pious; like Frid, I would wish to make all happy. Seize, torment a bee, and it will sting, and leave poison in the sting; but leave it in its freedom, let it possess its wings and its flowers, and it will suck and confer only delicious sweetness.

FEIMA. And what wouldest thou desire of the gods?

KUMBA. Beauty, high birth, wealth, and—a king's love; room in the halls of Odin after death, for me and all my race.

FEIMA. Kumba, thou art mad. Thy glance is wild. Poor sister! Thy mind is diseased. Come, O come with me to cool thy brow with the holy water, and offer and pray with me in the still morning, while the tumult of the world is

hushed, and when Heimdal's ever-listening ears can be reached even by the lowest prayers. Come!

KUMBA. I will not, sister. At the prayers which now arise within me, thou wouldest be horrified, and the gods would reject me. Thou art right. My soul is sick. Therefore go, leave me alone. Go!

FEIMA. And what shall I say to the king's daughter, when she inquires after her rosebud?

KUMBA. Tell her that a bitter north wind broke it off.

FEIMA. Then thou wilt not accompany me?

KUMBA. No, I say; no! Leave me alone.

FEIMA (*aside, as she goes away*). I will then go alone, and pray for her. Yet—Hreimer, will gladly accompany me to offer with me for the unhappy sister. [She goes.

SCENE III.

KUMBA (*alone*). Yes, go! Offer, pray to the mercenary, the unjust gods. I am not childish enough to do that. But she is good and pious. Were I but pious as she! Can I not be so? No! for I know more than she; my eyes have pierced deeper into the dark disposal of events; and a poison corrodes me, which she does not know. "Why dost thou not fly?" she demanded. "Wherefore dost thou not solicit thy freedom?" Unhappy power, which binds my will and my soul! Abhorred, beloved torment, which causes me to court what I never can win, and to seek what I ought to fly from, thou wilt tyrannise over me in life and in death. Ah! why saw I the glorious object that I am not to possess? Why should I behold a day which will never shine for me? Why, stern and terrible fate, didst thou allure me up into the light, only to plunge me deeper into my darkness? The mischief is now done; my eyes are dazzled, my glance is fascinated, my heart is doomed, my life is given over to misery. Here is my torment, and here must I remain; so will the inexorable Powers. I must, because I must hear his name pronounced. Not to hear him mentioned, is not to get air to breathe. I must see him again, once more hear his voice, and live in the lustre of his eyes. O King Dag! wilt thou notice the bondmaiden? Wilt thou give one look, one thought, to her who would gladly die for thee? Thou wilt

clap thy proud steed with thy strong victorious hand ; but it would be defiled by the touch of the hand of Kumba. For Frid—for the king's daughter—is thy hand ; for her, thy embraces, thy kisses, thy great, proud hero-heart. And her do I tend and adorn every day, that she may become more beautiful for thee, and all the happier in thy love. Every day shall I see her beauty and happiness, and feel myself devoured by envy. O depth of anguish ! O bottomless pit ! In thee am I doomed to live and move for ever !

[*She pauses.*

In the cold, foggy Nifelhem is the fountain Hvergelmer. Streams of poison rush from it ; and in its depth, amid countless snakes, lies the great snake Nidhögg, which gnaws at the root of the tree of the world—gnaws, gnaws till it decays. When I was very young, the Saga easily made me shudder. I am now quite at home in it. I seem sometimes indeed to be myself the fountain, that mist is my world, and that the worm gnaws at the tree of my life. [Again silent.

Sometimes dark thoughts rise up within me. It is said that elves of darkness, which live on the northern edge of the earth, beneath the deepest roots of the Tree of the World, sometimes ascend thence, and speak words with the children of men, which fright the light of day. Hell sends them forth to execute its commissions and affairs. It seems to me as if at times the voice of evil spirits spoke within me and exhorted me to [Another silence.

If I could but die, and find rest ! Could my life, after death, but become pleasant ; might once the freed spirit but look down from heaven upon the earth, where it had suffered and been tormented Did I but know that a merciful God had prepared for his tired and weary child a peaceful and bright abode, where it might repose after its hard conflict, O then could I still submit myself ! could then renounce, then [Weeps.

But, O ye gods ! ye have forgotten us, and therefore is my spirit exasperated. To your favourites you have given all, to us nothing. Nothing ? Yes, bitterness ! poison ! But with the poison there is strength. Ye Gods ! if from the drops which from hour to hour you cause to drop into my bosom, there swells a stream which burns and destroys, the guilt fall —on you !

SCENE IV.—FRID'S *Bedchamber*.

FRID. KUMBA.

FRID. Kumba! Plait my hair, and anoint it with the oil of the south, which I received from King Dag.

KUMBA. What thou commandest I will do.

FRID. And while thou plaitest it, relate to me some of the Sagas which thou knowest so well. It is justly said that the dwelling of the Sagas is surrounded by the murmurs of cool billows, to whose rushing Odin gladly listens. Enlivening and soothing at the same time are Sagas and song,—a worthy pastime for the race of the gods.

KUMBA. Wilt thou, king's daughter, hear the ancient Sagas of Rig ?*

FRID. Gladly.

KUMBA. Heimdal—so it is said; the trusty and wise god, went once on a time to walk in the country, and came on the sea-shore to a house which he entered. The door stood wide open; a fire burnt on the hearth, and within sate the inhabitants, grown grey with labour, Ae and Edda, in old-world garments. Edda took out of the ashes the heavy, thick, seed-mingled cake, brought forth the soup in a bowl; but the greatest delicacy was the sodden calf. Heimdal, who called himself Rig, continued three nights there, and nine months after his departure, Edda gave birth to a son, which was baptized and named Träl (Slave). He grew and flourished, was of a dark complexion, had wrinkled skin on his hands, contracted knuckles, thick fingers, an ugly countenance, a hump-back, and long heels. A beggar-girl came to the house; her feet sore, her arms sunburnt, her nose hooked. She was called Trälinna (bondwoman, or female slave). She lived there with Träl the heavy days, and bore him sons and daughters. Their employment was to twine boat ropes, to drag loads, to carry firewood, to keep and fatten cattle, herd swine, watch the goats, dig turf. From her came the race of slaves.

Rig went farther, and found in another house another pair. The door stood a-jar; fire burned on the hearth. The husband was shaping a tree into a weaver's beam; his beard was

Introduced into the older Edda. See Geijer's "Svea Rikes Häfder

trimmed, his hair cut on the forehead ; he had a close shirt, which was fastened by a clasp at the neck. The wife twirled the spinning-wheel, spun thread, and converted it into clothing. She had a fillet on her head, a brooch on her bosom, a cloth round her neck, and ribbon on the shoulders. The couple were called Afe and Amma. Rig was hospitably entertained, and stayed with them three nights. Nine months afterwards, Amma gave birth to a son, rosy and blooming, with sparkling eyes. He was baptized and called Karl. He grew and throve, learned to tame oxen, to cultivate land, to build houses, forged horsenails, made carts, drove the plough. To him was conducted home as a bride, Snör, hung round with keys, in kirtle of goat's hair. They exchanged rings, spread the sheet, built a house. They had sons and daughters, and of them are come the race of *Karls*, or free men.

Rig went farther. He came to a hall. The door was closed, and adorned with a ring. He entered. The floor was strown. There sat the couple, looking each other in the eyes—*Fader* and *Moder*. Their work was play. The husband shaped bows, twisted strings, polished arrows. The wife ironed and starched her sleeves, and made up a head-dress. She had a jewel on her breast, a silken kirtle, blue figured linen, a countenance more beautiful, a bosom more charming, a neck more white than the recent snow. *Moder* spread the figured white cloth on the table, set on it the thin white wheaten cakes, and dishes of embossed silver, full of all kinds of meat, pork, and roasted birds. There was wine in flagons and embossed cups; they drank and talked till the day dawned. Rig remained three nights there also, and after nine months, *Moder* brought forth a son, who was wrapped in silk, was baptized, and called *Jarl*. His hair was flaxen, his cheeks bright, his eyes keen as those of a young eagle. He grew up, twisted bow-strings, shaped bows, flung the spear, shot arrows, shook lances, rode horses, hunted with hounds, drew the sword, and exercised himself in swimming. Then came Rig again to the court, taught him Runes, gave him *his* name, and acknowledged him as *his son*. The young Rig therefore marched over the rocks in war, won victories and lands, distributed goods and estates, and married the daughter of Herve, the slender, fair, noble Erna. Of their sons, the youngest was Konr. He contended with his father

Rig in the knowledge of Runes, and won. Then was it the son's lot to be himself called Rig, and thenceforth to understand Runes beyond all others. From him are descended the Jarls and kings.

Here ends the Saga about Rig.

FRID. Thanks, Kumba! The Saga is beautiful and full of meaning.

KUMBA (*aside*). Beautiful! Yes, for her.

FRID. But my attention was distracted while I listened to it. A great, a precious, and almost terrible recollection came vividly on my soul. To-day, three years ago, I saw, for the first time, King Dag.

KUMBA. Ah! speak of that! (*aside*.) The poison is sweet!

FRID. Thou knowest that my father's brother, the gloomy Atle, had in an engagement killed King Dag's father, the victorious King Ifvar. King Dag, and his brother Ragnar, revenged their father's death, and stormed my uncle's castle. Shut up in the inner room of the castle with my tender brother Arild, I heard the din of arms, and the battle-cries of the warriors. Arild clenched his little hands in wrath. I prayed to the gods for his life, for I held him as dear as a mother. Suddenly I heard a cry, accompanied by a wild jubilation of victory. "Atle is fallen! The brave Ragnar has slain him!" But immediately thereon—"Ragnar is wounded! Ragnar is dead! Revenge! revenge!" Amid a horrid din, steps drew near the room. Before the strokes of war-axes the door went to pieces. At this moment I felt not fear, but wrath and a proud desperation. I had seized spear and shield, and stood there resolved to die, rather than to surrender myself a prisoner; and till my last breath to defend the little one. "Back!" thundered a lordly voice to the on-pressing martial throng; and environed by the flashings of bloody swords, as by a thousand jagged lightnings, I beheld before me a man—a god he seemed to me to be.

KUMBA. It was *he*!

FRID. Yes, it was *he*! It was King Dag! "Yield thyself!" exclaimed he to me. In answer I sought his breast with my spear. My trembling hand was arrested by his sword, and he disarmed me. Bleeding, I sunk by my brother's side, exclaiming, "Mercy for him! Mercy for the child!" "Death to the traitor's son!" cried wildly the

warriors, and rushed on. King Dag turned himself to his people, and covered us with his shield. "Back!" exclaimed he once more commandingly to the wild troop. "With women and children we contend not. The victory is won. Down with your weapons!" But a frantic lust of murder had taken possession of Ragnar's people, and they cried—"Blood for blood!" Then shouldst thou have seen King Dag! Glorious and strong as the god Thor, he lifted his broadsword in defence of the helpless. Like lightning flew its strokes whistling through the air, and fell on the blood-thirsty warriors. Heaps of dead were round his feet.

KUMBA. The brave! the glorious!

FRID. Seized with amaze at his superhuman strength, Ragnar's people began to give way. Then cried King Dag—"Hither, my men! Every true friend follow me!" He lifted up Arild, and placed him in the arms of one of his warriors; he took myself in his own, and guarding me with shield and sword, he broke through the tumult of war. I saw nothing more. A swoon overpowered my senses; my eyes were closed.

KUMBA. But he watched over thee?

FRID. When I opened them again, it was night; but a night lighted up by a red and wild splendour. I saw from the distant strand a castle stand all in flames; but cool winds fanned my cheek, and farther and farther over the dancing waves, conveyed me the winged sea-dragon, and my little brother stood beside me under the purple pavilion, and clapped his hands in childish joy over the novel spectacle. Before me, on his knee, his godlike beautiful countenance illumined by the flames of the burning, and with uncovered head, lay King Dag, and I was his captive!

KUMBA (*aside*). Happy lot!

FRID. Ah, yes! His captive. For my heart had he conquered,—the brave, the noble one; and I could not then, as I wished, in proud anger turn from the victor my glance. By his strength he had disarmed my hand, by his love he now sought to win my love; and when he prayed me as beautifully, as mildly as Balder, when he begged me, as a favour, to accept his kingdom and his crown, then I let him see what my heart felt, and he pressed me to his heart, and called me his bride.

KUMBA. Thou happy one !

FRID. Yes, I was happy. Days and nights went on, and life was to me like a beam of the light of God's heaven—all around me was so beautiful. The sea-dragon flew over the blue sea, under the dark-blue heaven, and the waves danced merrily around the prow, covered with golden shields, and the wind sung in the purple silken sails, splendidly embroidered with rich silver vine-branches. By day, King Dag exercised his men in martial manœuvres, and fired them to an almost frenzied, yet joyous daring, while I watched them from the royal pavilion. When the evening came, and sea and winds were lulled, then took King Dag his harp, and played and sung by my side, which made my heart beat with transport. Then burned the stars clearer, and the spirits of the sea arose in enchantment to the surface of the water ; then seemed the sea to burn with a strange light, and we floated onward as on waves of fire. All things did homage to the glorious one, and he did homage to me ; yes, happy was I, happy, amid the dangers of war ! My father's castle was plundered and burnt. Enemies' hosts invaded King Dag's realm. We possessed no home. Then the son of Valhalla conducted me to the temple of Upsala, and gave me there an asylum, while he advanced against his enemies. He returned, and brought me to this strong castle ; but was himself again soon obliged to leave me, in consequence of a vow which forbade him to celebrate a joyous feast before he had freed his unfortunate sister Gudrun out of her ignominious captivity. Here should I remain, guarded by his trusty men, till he should return from the Saxon coast.

KUMBA. And if he do not return ? If he perish in strife on the distant strand ?—

FRID. No, no ! I fear nothing. A far-prescient Vala, a renowned prophetess, who visited the temple of Upsala, has told me his fate. His course will be long and victorious. From this campaign he will return happily, and rich in honours and treasures.

KUMBA. Thou hast seen the temple of Upsala, the magnificent court of the gods ! Thou hast lived amongst Diar and Disor. Were they beautiful and happy ?

FRID. Yes, yes, beautiful and blessed. A noble tranquillity, an infinite dignity repose on their features, and breathe

through their whole being. The cares and the joys of earth touch them not ; they stand high above them, gazing into the clearness of the heaven of the gods. The countenance of the chief priest is majestic as we conceive of that of Odin, full of power and mildness. All disquiet dies in him who contemplates it : the before stormy heart hushes itself involuntarily at his glance, and is at peace.

KUMBA (*aside*). Peace, ah ! And I ? (*aloud*.) And the temple and its happy abodes are really splendid ?

FRID. Beyond all description. Of gold and precious stones are the walls ; a radiance glows thence, which illuminates the country far around. The gorgeous splendour of the interior of the temple testifies to the power of the divinity ; while the silence in the sacred groves, in the lofty halls, interrupted only by the solemn songs of the Diars, speaks of its sublimity, and draws the spirit to contemplation. Had I not so deeply loved King Dag, I should have dedicated myself to the service of the gods, and continued there amongst the sacred Assynior.

KUMBA (*aside*). She chooses between the throne and the temple. But I ?—

FRID. When I recal those days, a wonderfully delightful and solemn feeling seizes me. Ah ! it was beautiful in the courts of the temple, in its lofty halls ! Pondering on the counsel of the gods, silently walked the deep-thinking Diars—

KUMBA. And didst thou learn their secret wisdom—the verses which teach how to quiet waves, quench fire, and dissipate care ? Didst thou get to know about the beginning and the end of all things ?

FRID. No ! I was too young, and too much engrossed by the outward splendour of life, and by my love. My voice, indeed, blended with the songs of the Assynior, and I took part in their nocturnal dances, in their ceremonies ; but their meaning I understood not. They regarded me—and justly—as not worthy to comprehend them.

KUMBA. And what, indeed, is all the wisdom of the priests in comparison with the love of such a king as King Dag ?

FRID. Thou sayst truly, Kumba. But had I never seen him, then could I have preferred, beyond any earthly throne, to live as a priestess in the holy temple. Asgård, as it is also

called, is an image of the celestial Asgård, the eternally green Gudhem ; and beautiful is it, amid offerings and songs of praise, to walk before the gods on earth, and up to their everlasting abodes above us.

KUMBA. That I can believe. Are there always offerings in the temple ?

FRID. Yes, often ; but there are in particular three great annual festivals, which were instituted by Odin. Recently has been celebrated the Sacrifice of Victory, that takes place in spring, when the open waters invite to Viking-voyages.

KUMBA. And do they indeed sacrifice men ?

FRID. Yes. Most commonly slaves and malefactors.

KUMBA. Slaves and malefactors ?

FRID. Yes ; but sometimes also the noblest life. The victim is led forth festively adorned ; the seats of the gods are tinged with blood ; it is also sprinkled on the assembled people. The smoke which ascends from the flame of sacrifice is delicious, and fills the halls with a delicious aroma. Sweetly sound in accordance the songs of the priests.

KUMBA. But the victims, the victims ! do they complain not ? do not their shrieks of misery ascend above the songs of the priests ?

FRID. Their wailings are prevented ; or are drowned in the songs of praise.

KUMBA. They are drowned by the songs of praise ?

FRID. Yes, and no dissonance disturbs the majesty and beauty of the lofty solemnity.—But what is this, Kumba ? I hear the tramp of steeds, the pealing of horns ; the drawbridge is raised ! There must be tidings—important ones ! Good Kumba, go, fly, and bring me word what it is.

[KUMBA goes.

SCENE V.

FRID (*alone*). It is certainly a messenger from King Dag ! My heart assures me of it ;—how it beats ! Still, thou unquiet one, still ! O the pleasures and the pangs of love ! And yet, beloved pangs, I would not exchange you for the Assynior's eternal repose ! O my king ! to love thee, that is my life ; but if my heart beats thus at the anticipation of a message from thee, how shall I be able to see thy face and not die of joy ?

SCENE VI.—FRID. KUMBA.

KUMBA. A letter—from—King Dag! With it there are costly presents—

FRID. A letter! Give it me, give it me! O ye dear Runes! (*kisses the Runic tablet and reads*). He comes, comes soon! Before the next new moon he is here! Victorious, rich in honour and spoil, comes he to his bride, “the eternally beloved.” O my bridegroom! O my Dag!

KUMBA (aside). And I?

FRID. I will myself make the arrangements for the messenger's reception. I will myself speak with him. I must see the man who has lately seen my beloved; I must hear him talk of King Dag. Kumba, go thou and work on the golden girdle, and be diligent, Kumba, that it may be quickly ready. I will wear it on the king's arrival. I desire that he should find his bride beautiful. I shall then really see him soon! Happy I!

[*Goes.*

SCENE VII.

KUMBA (alone). But I! Why was I born? Shall I now see them, their embraces, hear their sighs of love and vows of truth? Shall I adorn her for him; help to make her still more beautiful in his eyes? So has she commanded. O ye great! ye dream not that a slave also has a human heart. You trample it under your feet, and give it not a thought, and take not the slightest heed of its death-pangs. “They drown their complaints,” said she, “that the joy of the high solemnity may not be disturbed.” They dragged them forth to the stone of sacrifice; they murdered them, and drowned their complaints. Out of the fire which devoured their quivering limbs there arose a sweet odour for the chief priest who sung the praises of the gods. But the men! the slaves! the poor! no help, no escape. They must submit. They were dragged forth spite of prayers and resistance. They must submit. Horrible doom of the Norna! Hard necessity! And for me to—but why necessity for me? If I will, who can constrain me? Can I not, if I will it, command both my own fate and that of others? Necessity exists only

for the weak. The strong makes his own laws, and compels even the gods. My stature indeed is low, but my will is strong. Let the sacrificers tremble.

If I should kill Frid, and clothe myself in her garments, and deceive King Dag in the obscurity of night? Loke was cunning, and Loke was successful. I feel that his fire burns in my veins. (*She puts on FRID's mantle, and puts her crown on her head.*) In truth a glorious costume. Well may the heart beat proudly beneath this splendour. Now am I the king's daughter. (*She gazes at herself in a burnished steel shield.*) Woe is me! I am it not. My figure is short and thick, my eyes small, my hand rough. Woe! I am the bond-woman's daughter, and my lot is fixed, woe! (*Flings down the robe and crown, and stamps violently.*) No, I will not; I will not long endure this torture. The snake rages in my vitals, and I long after something which may still its hunger. It must be done—by some means! Shall I go to the temple, and gaze into the divinely-tranquil countenance of the chief priest, which allays all disquiet? No; I see the sacrificial knife in his hand!—the victim bleeds,—the sacrificers cry—it is the tranquillity of the gods!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS OF LIGHT UP IN THE AIR.

Look to heaven,
To the sun look,
They deceive men never;
Shrieks of victims
Shall have ending,
God's sure goodness never!

Offer hatred,
Offer vengeance,
Meed of vengeful will,—
'Tis but torture;
But the true heart's
Lot is lovely still.

Wonder not then
At the lofty
Peace of powers sublīmo.
See how brighten
Earth's own fortunes
In the far-off time!

From the depths, and
From the heights, will
There be heard a voice,
That to captive
And to mourner
Shall proclaim—"rejoice!"

Dumb shall grow each
Elfin chorus;
But in heaven's acclaim
Loftier spirits
Shall adore the
World-Redeemer's name.

KUMBA (*wakes out of deep thought, and says slowly*). But, perhaps, after the conflict——after the sacrifice, after the last bitterness, the last eclipse——it will become light——it will be calm, for the victim! If one surrenders oneself freely, bleeds quietly, prays, and dies!——I hear happy voices speak of peace and reconciliation,—but, perhaps, they are only seductive illusions. I have had such before!——

CHORUS OF SPIRITS OF DARKNESS UNDER THE EARTH.

Sweet is revenge, for
It strengthens and quiets
Feelings of storm in
The suffering heart.
Drink of its fountain,
Heart, thirst-consumed,
Deep be thy draught,
And thy thirst is no more.

Slavish souls waver—
They will and they will not;
Dare, then shrink trembling,
And perish in pain!
Spirits heroic
Dare, and accomplish,
Quenching their pangs
In the conqueror's blood.

KUMBA (*as before*). Yes. Yes, they were illusions—and I was merely weak. I hear well-known voices ascend out of the depth, and reproach me with it. Despicable is the eternally-complaining, eternally-hesitating soul. Despicable I will not be. I know what I will do. Yonder, far amongst the rocks, on the desolate shore, which the traveller dreads

and the mariner shuns, dwelleth a sorceress, noted for her various knowledge, and exercising the mighty magic art—*Seid*. To her I will go—will bestow on her the most precious thing which I possess, on condition that she exerts her magic art for me, and gives my heart rest. Ha! this thought invigorates my soul. It is said that snakes and wolves are her companions. Them I fear not. I have known them as they raged here within me. Away! away! To her! to her!

SCENE VIII.—FRID (*alone, standing in a window of the Castle*).

FRID. What a storm! The night is wild, and in vain have I sought rest upon my bed. The sea-gull's cries sound shrill amid the roar of the waves. Ran's daughters, the dolorous, the poison-mixing, who, with pale hair, wander from rock to rock, seeking warm human hearts that they may press to their cold bosoms, how they now rave and foam, tumbling over each other—the terrible ones! Wildly dash pale lightnings from the careering clouds. O ye friendly powers, who desire the good of men, protect my beloved one on his voyage. Conduct him victoriously through the storms and the waves! He is a true descendant of the race of the gods, and so is his bride. Protect, bless us both! [She is silent.]

Is it the gloom of night which thus operates on my mind, or—is it an unhappy foreboding? But there is a strange feeling in my bosom, and gloomy thoughts arise there, like the black elves out of the earth. Frid was not formerly weak and easily terrified; she has not trembled at the thunders of war; and when the winter-night came black and threatening, then I thought on King Dag and remained cheerful. Why then now? Now that he is no longer far off, now that he approaches every moment nearer to me, when I shall speedily look into his clear eyes—wherefore now this unquiet, this secret quaking in my heart? [Pauses.]

The sky is dark and wild. On the desolate coast gleam meteor lights. I know that they are base creatures, and seek to injure mankind. But ought, indeed, flames, gleaming spirits of witchcraft, to work evil to a descendant of Balder? Ought King Dag's bride to fear them. She will not.

[Another silence.]

What strange power is it which moves itself in the air—so strong, so mighty to disturb? And this light, so mild, almost faint, like a feeble petitioner—whom does it guide through the dark night? Why is this light so different to that of the sun in splendour, and in its effect on the heart? How it battles with the dark clouds! Now it is quenched. Strange world, strange dark deep!—

I have been very happy. I have gone through life as in the radiance of a strong sunshine. If at any time the night threatened me, there came only a brighter day. But if the night should now come in earnest, and change my life into darkness!—

I have not reflected much on life. The very happy merely enjoy, and do not think. I have enjoyed life, and praised the goodness of the gods. But many are not so happy as I am. Many have little or no gladness. How do the world and the gods appear to them?—

Thoughts arise in me which I never had before. The lot of life seems to me strangely dealt on the earth. Why do some men receive so much, and others so little? The goddesses of fate sprinkle the branches of the tree of the world with life-giving streams; but the drops fall unequally. O! but the fresh, the richly-sprinkled branches will bend themselves over the dry ones, and impart to them of their moisture. This is certainly the will of the benevolent gods, and Frid's highest happiness shall be to follow it. And if some time my hour should come, my hour to suffer—what is that? Ye gods! what a hideous shape rides there on the pale moonbeams! He is little and black as a son of Hel. Is it one of the spirits which was born to Loke by the witch Angurboda; or is it a creation of my sick imagination? No, it draws nearer! It is no illusion!—Speak, hideous one! Who art thou? What is thy will?

BLACK-ELF. From the under-earth I come on a message to thee.

FRID. To what end? Wherefore?

BLACK-ELF. Misfortune awaits thee. Death threatens thee.

FRID. Death! Ah, no! I will not die, no!

BLACK-ELF. Death is near thee.

FRID. Nay, nay! Ah! What dost thou at my heart?

It is become so heavy. Away, black one, away Thou mayst
not injure me! I am of the race of the gods.

BLACK-ELF. Hel waits for thee in his dark dwelling.

[*He vanishes.*

FRID. I will not! No, I will not! Away! Ha! What
a frost there is in my veins! Kumba! Kumba!

SCENE IX.—KUMBA. FRID.

KUMBA. Princess?

FRID. Kumba! I am ill! Nay, turn not so pale, Kumba.
It will pass away. Is he gone, the hideous one? Seest thou
nothing, Kumba?—there, in the moonshine?

KUMBA. I see nothing—except the shadow of thy own
head on the wall. Look thyself.

FRID. I have, indeed, had a bad dream. It was a miser-
able dream—a very miserable dream. It agitated me deeply.
It was a weakness. Give me something to drink.

KUMBA. Take this draught. It will strengthen you.

FRID. Thanks—I need it. How thy hand trembles, good
Kumba. The drink was good. Thanks, Kumba!

KUMBA (*after a moment's silence*). Dost thou feel thyself
better?

FRID. Yes—I am better. I am calmer now. Go again
to thy bed, Kumba. I, too, will go to rest, and endeavour to
forget this dream. Good night.

KUMBA. *Good night!* [She withdraws.

FRID. I will try to sleep. I will no longer think on this
hideous apparition. It was, perhaps, only a deception, a
night shadow, which will vanish in the light of day. I will
sleep,—I will sleep.

ACT II.—SCENE I.—*The Flower Garden. The evening.*

KUMBA. FEIMA.

KUMBA. Thou wepest, Feima.—Wherfore?

FEIMA. Canst thou ask? Is not the daughter of kings
sick, sick to death? Do not her steps every day become
fainter, her cheeks paler? See we not the traces of bitter
tears on that countenance which before beamed only with
smiles? Is not her very voice weak and faltering?

KUMBA. And therefore dost thou weep ?

FEIMA. Yes ; I weep, I will weep, that the lovely, the divinely-good Frid shall go away from the earth ; that Hreimer and I shall lose our beloved mistress ; that the young king will come home, and find his beautiful bride grown pale. How desolate will the rose-garden be, when we no longer see there the daughter of kings, no longer hear her silver voice ; no longer see her beautiful countenance, she, the queen of all flowers ! O, it was a feast for me even to look upon her !

KUMBA. Thou callest her the divinely-good. Why sayst thou that ?

FEIMA. Is she not so ? Does she not desire to make every creature happy ?

KUMBA. Out of her rich treasure, she takes some gold-dust and throws it around her. Who could not do that ? What endures, what suffers she for the help of her fellow-creatures ? Does she, indeed, touch with a finger the burden under which thou art bowed down ? Does she stoop in order to alleviate thy fatigue ?

FEIMA. Kumba, thou art strange ! Can, indeed, one of the race of the gods do thus ?

KUMBA. Why not, if it be good ? Is not goodness, is not mercy divine ?

FEIMA. Yes ; but the high gods, and their descendants, cannot perform the labours of slaves. It is not befitting them. Every one has his proper part.

KUMBA. See then—it is therefore that I cannot do homage to thy gods, because they deem themselves too good to do good to us. *My God*, he before whom I would bow my knee, must do otherwise.

FEIMA. And how ?

KUMBA. He should cause himself to be born in a lowly hut ; he should participate in our burdens and our sufferings ; he should choose his friends from amongst the despised and poor. He should, like the slaves, be scorned by the high, and partaking in their whole fortune, should, although innocent, be put to death as a malefactor. But after death, he should come again in his glory to his own, and say to them, —“I have suffered this with you and for you, that you might

not despair, but believe that the Father of all looks down upon you ; for, on the other side of Hel's dwellings, he has prepared a place for you, where you shall rest from your labours, where your tears shall be wiped away, and where you shall live in glory with me to the end of the world ! " Oh, many other words should he say, at which the earth should tremble—power should be thrown down—chains should burst, and the fate of the slaves be changed the earth be bathed in blood ! Ha ! glorious, glorious !

FEIMA. What spirit speaks through thee ? Foam stands around thy pale lips. And thy words ! How wild and strange they sound ! **KUMBA !** listen ! Thou terrifiest me ; but I understand thee not.

KUMBA. That I believe.

FEIMA. But this I understand, that she is good who gave me this chain, who built for Hreimer and me a cottage ; who every day made my heart glad with her friendly words. I know that I would rather bear burdens twice as heavy than see her oppressed by the least thing. When she commands, and I obey her, I know that it ought so to be, and that it is best for us both that it should be so.

KUMBA. Thou art a slave, body and soul. Remain in thy dust !

FEIMA. I will so, Kumba, and it shall not hinder me from being contented, and from believing in the goodness of the gods to great and small. To the gods will I now pray for the daughter of kings, that she may be restored to life, to her young consort and us. Blessed be he who heals her ; blessed be he who averts from her Hel's cold hand ! But cursed be he who desires her suffering ! And if it be a human hand, may it be thus cursed ! May Nifelhem's cold poison-stream drop for ever on the traitor's heart ; may he never enjoy gladness on the earth !

KUMBA. Sister, speak not thus !

FEIMA. Yes, thus will I speak ! I will work evil to the evil one who desires the death of the good one ! But I will not yet despair. I will sacrifice and pray for her. Seest thou this beautiful chain ? I received it from her ; for her will I offer it for the reconciliation of the unfriendly powers !

[Goes.]

SCENE II.

KUMBA (*alone*). Blessings, curses, all are alike to me now, and stir my heart scarcely more than a faint evening breeze stirs the leaf of the aspen. Thus has it been within me since I ate of the she-wolf's heart, at the old woman's in Jernskog. It made my heart hard and cold. The swelling, its scathing torture, ceased. Hunger for revenge grew strong for action. I took courage to give to the proud daughter of kings the poison-draught which the sorceress had prepared. Since then there lies a trance upon my soul—it seems to me to sleep heavily, heavily;—will it not awake? (*A pause.*) Frid is dying. Now is her joyous career closed. Now she partakes the mortal fate of others, and can learn what suffering is. Now will she not embrace, and be embraced by King Dag. All this beauty, this pride, this splendour will wither, moulder into dust! No more will she pass like a reproach over my life, my feelings. I shall get rest!

Rest! Thou didst promise it me, mighty, dark Grimgerda; but yet lives a gloomy disquiet in the depth of my soul. I thirst after her tears. Methinks they would cool my tongue. A hunger devours me to see her sufferings, to hear her lamentations. That must proceed from the she-wolf's heart. Before, I was not so hard. And yet—if it could but be undone—if I could in the fountain of Urda purify myself from this guilt could I yet go away and die innocent!

But it is too late. Therefore away, foolish thoughts! It is too late; I cannot return; and therefore forward, forward into the night, till all becomes dark; forward into hardness, till all becomes rigid and dead. Powers of Afgrund, strengthen my heart! I cannot win reconciliation with heaven. Well then, Afgrund! give to me then the benefit of my crime. Frid approaches. I will fix my attention on her feeble gait, on her pale countenance, her dimmed glance. Ha! now be proud, daughter of kings! Boast now of love and honour I will hide myself behind the hedge of roses, and listen to her bewailings. Sweeter will they be to me than the song of the nightingale in the evening.

SCENE III.—FRID (*her appearance betrays a great debility, a wasting suffering*).

FRID. This is the hour when all things weep the death of Balder. There is no tree, no leaf, no flower, which is not bathed in silent tears; the very stones are bedewed with sadness. Now is Nature weak; her soul is moved; now can she perhaps feel sympathy with the sufferings of a daughter of humanity; and will hear her prayer, and put an end to her torment.

[*She supports herself thoughtfully against a tree.*

He died, the good—wounded by the hand of a subtle foe, and in the same instant Peace quenched her torch, and Discord kindled her crackling flames. Pain and tears made their home on the earth. Before, it was not thus; before, it was very different. The gods played joyously on the green earth, and in love created the race of men. But giant maids came and excited woe; and monsters arose, and strife

I did not notice this before, but now I see it, for the agony which consumes my body, opens my eyes to the world's suffering. What is good what is pure in life? Does not the serpent of Midgård coil his venomous circle round the earth? Does not Nidhögg gnaw at the root of the Tree of the World? Is there not found a concealed worm in every human heart, in the bosom of every flower? It slumbers for a while, and the flower diffuses its fragrance, and the man smiles. But it wakes, comes forth, and stings, and the flower withers, and the man dies.

My hour, too, is come; my hour of suffering. Since the night when the Black-elf came with its message of terror, a secret disease corrodes my heart, and my days and my nights are without repose. My eyes are weak, my lips parched, my knees tremble—my strength of life dies away!

O Dag! O my bridegroom! What wilt thou say when thou comest to thy castle, and findest thy bride changed into a pale ghost? Yes, perhaps before but no! that were too cruel! To die without having seen thee were eternal misery. No! so savage the Nornor are not! O no! Stands not the All-Father's heaven above me so clear and mild? Stand not the beings of nature all around me so tearful and tender? Why, then, should I despair? Why

should I not yet hope to regain life and happiness? Perhaps this suffering was merely sent to make me better, and more grateful. I will bow myself before the gods of nature, and implore them for help; for great is my suffering, great my need of alleviation.

O ye friendly powers which murmur in the green trees! Strong and healing are the juices which the sun pours into your bosoms. Proud and strong do ye stand against storm and winter, but on the head of the weary wanderer you stretch your protecting arms, and give a covert to the young of the bird. Hear, ye gentle existences, my lamentation and my prayer. Torture consumes my limbs, and will sink by degrees my body to the grave! Tell me, O tell me! have you strength which can give life to my strength; manna, which can invigorate mine?

THE SPIRITS OF THE TREE. We have it not!

FRID. Ye spirits which sport in the bosom of the flowers, which glance up so beautifully and joyously at the light, ye whom I trusted, and loved, and kissed; say, ye lovely, gracious beings, can ye alleviate, can ye help me?

SPIRITS OF THE FLOWERS (*softly and sadly*). We can not.

FRID. Ye pale dwarfs, which dwell in cliffs and stones! I turn to you now, and implore, implore with tears, for great is my suffering! You, too, weep the death of Balder. O certainly, goodness like gold dwells within your bosoms. Deny me not. Give healing; give help!

THE DWARFS (*roughly*). No!

FRID. Everywhere refusal! . . . that is hard. Nature abandons me. Mighty All-Father! wilt thou also do so? To thy heaven I venture to lift my hands, and pray for that life which I received as a gift from thee. Burns not thy evening-heaven so gloriously in the light of thy countenance? Dost thou not look down upon the earth with love, and on the beings whom thou hast created? All-Father! listen to my prayer! Let me live! Let me, at least, once more witness the return of my bridegroom; let me yet once see, and embrace my Dag! And if thou grantest my request—send me a sign. Let a star fall, let a sough pass through the grove! (*Pauses.*) All is hushed! It is silent as the grave. The red flames of evening expire, and the welkin grows dark.

Denied even here ! Denied or unheard. It is then certain !
I must die ! [Retires in silence.]

KUMBA (*comes forth*). Beautiful ! glorious ! She sighed ; she prayed like me, and was unheard like me. Now are we alike, daughter of kings. Pleasure sits like a cramp in my heart. For this moment of enjoyment have thanks, mighty Grimgerda !

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the Castle.* FRID lies on a couch.
It is deep twilight.

FRID. Long, long hours, how heavily ye stride on ; and nothing affords one moment of rest or forgetfulness. The worm gnaws, and eats even deeper into the tree of my life. *Hresvelger*, devourer of corpses !—thou who sittest at the northern end of heaven, and waftest with thy wings—I hear thy cold wind murmur around me. O, I am sick, sick even to the soul ! Darkness has obtained power over me ! My Dag is absent ! I shall die. I shall quit the friendly earth. I shall relinquish my chosen consort, never more to be enlightened by his glance, never more led by his hand. How will it be with me ? They tell of heavenly dwellings, where the noble and the just find entrance when they issue from Hel's dark realm. What are they ? Are they indeed for me, and how will it be with me in them ? Shall I never see again my beloved king ? Shall I love him still when death chills my heart ? Ah, what is my life without my love ! How uncertain, how desolate, pale, and wild is all in the realm of shadows ! I shall die ! I feel how my life dwindleth away. Shall it sink into eternal night ? But if all here in life—love, virtue, suffering, patience, should be in vain—O bitter, bitter thought ! Good All-Father, no ! That cannot be. I will hope, I will trust in thee. Thou didst create the sun and love—thou must be as good as thou art powerful. I will put my head beneath thy hand, and will praise thee even in the embrace of torture. When my tears fall, they shall not accuse thee. Forgive my weakness, my complaints ! They will soon be over. I have loved thee, and trusted in thee. I will love thee and trust in thee still, and in my love will find strength to bear my fate. [A pause.]

How peaceful is it become within my bosom ! I breathe

more easily. Methinks that a breath of life is breathed upon my forehead. It grows light.

[*A radiant LIGHT-ELF appears at the foot of FRID's bed.*
What an apparition ! My eyes are dazzled !

[*She covers her eyes with her hands. After a moment, she again looks up.*

Is it still there ? Beautiful, radiant being ! whose splendour is like that of the sun, whose countenance is mild as that of a vernal sky. Who art thou ? And whence ?

LIGHT-ELF. My home is the pale azure space. I am of the race of elves, a guardian genius for mankind.

FRID. O thou comest to me as a messenger of life and gladness ! Thou bringest me certainly some of the apples of Iduna, which have power to renew the youth even of the gods. Thou comest to restore to me health and happiness—my heart tells me so. Or why else shouldst thou come so kindly and radiantly ? The gods have sent thee to me to put an end to this bitter trial, to give me again my Dag ! Why is thy mild glance so powerful ? Why dost thou quench thy clear beams ? Ah, shine, shine, gracious being ! Kindle with thy light the beams of life again in my bosom.

LIGHT-ELF (*sorrowfully*). Daughter of man ! I cannot !

FRID. Cannot ? Art thou not sent hither by gracious powers to raise and gladden ?

LIGHT-ELF. I came to console thee—to make thy death less bitter.

FRID. Must I then die ?

LIGHT-ELF. The Nornor have determined it.

FRID. The goddesses of Fate ? The inexorable, the fearful ! What have I done to them ? Why do they desire my death ?

LIGHT-ELF. Daughter of man, I do not know. The children of Alfhem are permitted to know the will of the Mighty One, but not to penetrate its causes.

FRID. Then why comest thou to me ? Why shouldst thou, by awaking fresh hopes, awaken fresh pangs ? Leave me ! I can die without thee. Leave me ! Thy light gives me pain.

[*The LIGHT-ELF retires, and waits at the bottom of the room like a faint glimmer.*

FRID. Is he gone? I was impatient, hasty! How weak I am! And he came to give me consolation— But what? Do I not see yonder, although feeble, his friendly gleam? O come again, thou lovely, gracious being! Pardon the weakness of the dying. Come back! and if thou hast comfort to give me, speak to me, and strengthen my soul—

[*The LIGHT-ELF returns, but surrounds himself only with a feeble glow.* FRID proceeds.]

Thou art very good, and it does my heart good. I feel that to thee I can open my innermost heart. See, friendly being, I have suffered much in a short time; and my own anguish has made my eyes quick to perceive the sufferings of mortals. It has seemed to me that nothing was good on earth; and there have been moments in which I have doubted of the goodness of the gods—of all that makes life valuable; for all under the sun was uncertain and changeable—all flowers blooming only to wither—all creatures born only to die.

LIGHT-ELF. Does not the heaven vault itself eternally over the changeable earth, embracing it from morning till evening? So does the All-Father surround the world, and bear it in his faithful embrace. The sun continues for ever the same; and in the sun thou beholdest an image of the All-Father's ever-watching eye!

FRID. Yet war exists on earth; and the old legends prognosticate a fearful strife, in which the earth, and men, and gods shall perish.

LIGHT-ELF. They will rise again, glorified. *One God*, mighty, just, and good, will then reign in all. Balder will again live upon the earth, and all evil will disappear from it. O daughter of man! the path of life is strife; but the goal is peace, and the means reconciliation. A day shall come when heaven and earth become one, and gods and men, as of old, shall on the green Idavall play happily together.

FRID. But when the powers contend, when worlds perish and are born again, O say! where shall the souls who are already gone hence find their home?

LIGHT-ELF. Many good houses has the All-Father for the just on earth. But the most beautiful is the lofty Gimle; a house more fair than the sun, and roofed with gold. There shall faithful and word-keeping men dwell.

FRID. Is there a home there for me ? Shall my dwelling
be Gimle the lofty ?

LIGHT-ELF. Daughter of man ! I cannot tell thee that ; for many are the races of man, and many are the houses. Perhaps Frigga will take thee up into her glorious Vingolf, amongst the blessed troops of the Assynior. Perhaps wilt thou become one of the chosen virgins who dwell with Gefion in her heavenly palace. Thy dwelling I cannot declare ; but one thing I can promise thee, in the name of the mighty gods —life after death !

FRID. And tell me, O tell me !—for, of all things, that is to me the most important—shall I, beyond death, see again my beloved king, my bridegroom ?

LIGHT-ELF. Is thy soul strong in its love to him ?

FRID. Without him life has no value for me ; but to purchase immortality for him, I will myself become nothing.

LIGHT-ELF. O then rejoice, daughter of man ! For if thy love is stronger than death, then death can never again have power to separate you.

FRID. Almighty and good gods ! What sayest thou ?

LIGHT-ELF. After death thou shalt become his Fylgia, and guide him through all life's dispensations. In his dreams thou canst approach him, and whisper in his ears thy eternal truth ; thou canst warn him of the dangers which menace him, of the foe who seeks his life. When he reposes from his fatigues in war, thou canst draw near to him in the shape of a bird, and enchant his soul with song. Changed into the loveliest rose, thou canst breathe fragrance for him, and in fragrance impart thy love. When a treacherous enemy lies in wait for him, thirsting for his blood, thou canst take his form, and the traitor shall cast his spear at thee, and pierce—only the air ! But thou weepest ?

FRID. For joy ! How delightful are thy words, beautiful child of the azure welkin. Why do they not let death become bright ? I shall no longer fear the time which separates me from earthly life, since, O my Dag ! I shall then better be able to accompany and serve thee than I am in this mortal shape. But tell me more, O spirit of light ! tell under what circumstances his death-hour also shall arrive !

LIGHT-ELF. His Fylgia can cause him to fall with honour amid the glory of battle and victory. For him the house of

spirits cannot be dark, for thou wilt be there to receive him
The King of Shadows will unite thee to thy consort.

FRID. Beautiful, but wild sound thy words. Shuddering pass through me. Dark seems to me life in the kingdom of the dead. Yet love lives there, and in the Spirit's house I shall meet my consort. But afterwards, O Spirit of Light!—afterwards—shall he leave me? May I accompany him to Odin's radiant halls? May I not sit there on the seat by his side, and fill his cup with wine?

LIGHT-ELF. Mortal! ask no more. No more can I tell. Deep are the councils of the gods, and the children of Alfhem cannot fathom them. Many a secret rests yet in the breast of the mighty; many a beauty, many a strength, which one day shall be revealed. Many stars, yet unknown, shall be kindled in the All-Father's heaven.

FRID. And the life which shall be kindled in this celestial home—shall it no more die?

LIGHT-ELF. That is known to the gods; we know it not.

FRID. Radiant pictures hast thou given me, but surrounded by darkness. My soul is sorrowful.

LIGHT-ELF. O daughter of man! Complain not, but humble thyself before the will of the gods. For too insignificant is man, that the gods on his account should lay open their sacred depths. Be satisfied with the light which their goodness bestows, and sink consoled into the All-Father's embrace.

[*He disappears.*

SCENE V.—*A wild Scene of Rocks. It is night.*

KUMBA. Where am I? I have lost my way. Around me glide the spectres of night, and over me thunders the Avenger. It is so dark both without and within my bosom; is so stifling. Air! light!

[*Thunder and lightning. A tree near KUMBA falls headlong. She darts forward, and seeks refuge in a cleft of the rocks.*

What was that? Ha! merely a tree which fell, struck by the thunderbolt. Why do I tremble? Why am I terrified? Are not these bare uplands familiar to me? Are they not pale scenes out of my soul's thunder-night?

[*A pause.*

Why is it now so hushed, so silent ? This silence is torture. Why gleam the wan stars so wildly over the crags ? The whole sky is one cloud. Can they see through the clouds ? What comes sailing there over the black ridge of rocks ? Ah, merely a cloud, a dark thunder-cloud. It shrouds the stars ;—good !—I am tired of wandering about !—I have long gone round as in a magic circle ;—I must rest.

[*Pauses. KUMBA leans against a rock, and afterwards proceeds more calmly.*

It is the hour when the wilderness is alive ; when its miscreations, born at midnight, roam forth to visit the dwellings of man. The moon, the sun of dark spirits, sends abroad her wan beams to light them in their nocturnal way. There rides Mara on her dragon-steed, she who stifled King Vandland in his pleasant sleep, before he could say farewell to his family. There rise the dead and Dvalin's daughters from the bogs, and with peering eyes creep small spirits forth from their caves. Painful feelings, wicked thoughts go they to awaken in the souls of those who rest on their beds. They seek to create disquiet, I seek rest. I seek the sorceress, she who deceived me. I will compel her to keep her promise. But it is so dark ; I cannot find again the way to her house. Who shall show it to me ?

[*A whirlwind.*

Ha ! the whirlwind, the spirit of the sorceress ! That tells me that the old woman is not far off.

[*A fresh whirlwind.*

Again ! Good. I come, Grimgerda. Have thanks for thy strengthening summons.

[*Thunder and lightning.*

Why quakest thou, tree, till thy very roots tremble ? Why this howling in the wood ? Joturen makes such a riot amongst the rocky hills that the giant-cauldrons ring. Startled creep the dwarfs back into their hiding-places, terrified at the thunder of the gods. Cowardly creatures of earth ! Cold drops of perspiration, indeed, stand on my brow ; but I shrink not away like you ! Lighten, lighten, Father Thor, angry ruler of the cloudy air ; and if I must be thy Thrall after death, then is it only reasonable that for once thou shouldst serve me, and light up my earthly way with thy flaming glances.

[*Fierce lightnings, amid which KUMBA disappears among the crags.*

SCENE VI.—A black mountain Cave. Within glimmers a red fire. A kettle stands on the fire; three Vipers hang over it, out of whose mouths venom drops. The Sorceress Grimgerda stirs the kettle, while she mutters softly and makes mystic signs. Black-elves, wicked Disor, and Imps, move themselves restlessly in the cave. Two Wolves watch its entrance.

IMPS.

What is that which rustles?
 What is that which bustles
 In the wood and the dark out there?
 A woman cometh hither!
 Ah! now for a sly joke with her!
 Quick! and we'll seize her ere she is aware!

GRIMGERDA. Silence, witch-pack! to your places, or I shall teach you! If I receive company, what is that to you? If ye hold not your ungovernable tongues, I will turn you into stones—as I once did with some of you—and you shall have to lick up the rain. Back into your caves, I say! Intoxicate yourselves with the substantial poison-fumes, and sleep in peace till I need you. Only my choice attendants shall remain near me. Out of the way, bantlings!

[*The Imps being terrified away, four Shadow-shapes of a wild aspect remain about the Sorceress. The Wolves raise themselves and howl. At the same time enters KUMBA with a pale but defying face. GRIMGERDA strikes with her magic wand on the floor. The Wolves lie down, and KUMBA remains standing at the entrance of the Cave.*

GRIMGERDA. Silence there, presumptuous child of man! I know thee.

KUMBA. Dost thou know Kumba, the bondwoman's daughter? My feet mayst thou chain down, but not my will, my tongue.

GRIMGERDA. Perhaps that too—if I wish it. But I wish it not—now. Come nearer. Why art thou come hither?

KUMBA. To warn thee, witch, to keep thy vow.

GRIMGERDA. What? thou dost not speak civilly.

KUMBA. Give me rest! Give me rest! Thou promised to give me rest. But thou hast deceived me.

GRIMGERDA. Speak not so loudly. Thou wilt waken my little ones who sleep.

KUMBA. They sleep! It is now long since I have slept at all!

GRIMGERDA. What dost thou want?

KUMBA. Everything. O Grimgerda! if thou hast a human heart in thy bosom, then conceive my distress, and help me. The strength which thou gavest me is gone. The tranquillity which I felt at one time is gone; an anguish consumes me, more tormenting, more horrible, than that which I experienced before my crimes. The light of the sun terrifies me; the murmur of the trees makes me tremble; no sleep rests on my eyelids; no tear refreshes them; and I cannot look upon her whom I have murdered, upon her who now wears away patiently in despair, without feeling my heart transpierced as with a poisoned dart. The dart is called—remorse. Remorse drives me to thee to-day. I will have my crime undone. Grimgerda! thou who gavest the disease, knowest also the antidote. I entreat thee for a means to counteract the poison which kills the daughter of kings, the means to restore her again to life.

GRIMGERDA. Doth the arrow, once discharged, stop and turn back in its flight? Ask the stream to flow back to its source; the ridge of rocks to bend itself according to the changing current of the wind! Foolish mortal! That which is done cannot be undone; and a strong spirit denies not its own work.

KUMBA. Thou canst not.

GRIMGERDA. Cannot, because I will not; will not, because Jernskog's daughter cannot vacillate and repent.

KUMBA. Can gold purchase salvation for the daughter of kings?

GRIMGERDA. I love gold; but I will not deceive thee. Gold and treasure cannot save her. She must die.

KUMBA. It is determined then. She must die, and I—I am miserable!

GRIMGERDA. Poor child!

KUMBA. Dost thou pity me? Thou understandest me then: and there lives a heart in thy bosom. O Grimgerda! be good to me! I have suffered so much! Hast thou, too, suffered? Knowest thou the sorrow which devours the heart?

GRIMGERDA. I understand thee, and—it grieves me for thee. Here, my child, eat and strengthen thyself. Then we will talk further.

KUMBA. No, no! I cannot eat.

GRIMGERDA. Such good is not often offered. It gives clearness and learning in a variety of ways.

KUMBA. Give me peace! Give me a draught out of the cup of forgetfulness.

GRIMGERDA. The dead only drink that.

KUMBA. Give me death then! Let one of thy serpents sting me.

GRIMGERDA. Serpents do not sting their like.

KUMBA. Thy words, Grimgerda, sting all the more. But I will forgive thee all, if thou wilt but give me death and forgetfulness,—eternal, if possible.

GRIMGERDA. *They* only, who have not done something on earth memorable, *something great*, in good or in *evil*, can in death taste of the cup of oblivion.

KUMBA. Woe is me! The draught is not for me then. Listen! There is a sleep, a trance, between life and death, in which man feels neither snow nor rain, neither day nor the heat of the sun; knows nothing, feels nothing, except a reluctance to awake. Say, canst thou not plunge me into that?

GRIMGERDA. Thou desirest that which can alone be the lot of mighty spirits. Kumba, daughter of the bondwoman, thou art not ripe for that.

KUMBA. That, too, dost thou deny me? (*wildly.*) Well then, witch! discharge thy vow in another manner. I bought it dearly, and will not have done it for nothing. Thou promised my soul rest, and thou shalt keep thy promise, or I swear by Nastrand

GRIMGERDA. Silence, wretched slave! Darest thou to menace me? Abase thyself! Creep like a worm in the dust at my feet, or thou shalt ride on the wolf, and be stung by serpents. Fall down this instant, and beg pardon, or

KUMBA. Or what? Dost thou think that thou canst frighten me, Grimgerda? The pure light of the sun can terrify me, and the whispering of spirits in the wood can make me tremble; but thee—thee I fear not! Show me the torture which thou hast in thy power that is greater than that which

I already know. Let thy wolves tear me to pieces. I will laugh at it. But in the hour itself of my death, dread thou me, Grimgerda! It is not equal between us. What have I to lose, to fear? Nothing! But thou, witch, canst lose thy power and thy wealth. Tremble then! for I feel in my suffering heart a power which is greater than thine! Tremble, at the curse which in the hour of death shall issue from my pallid lips—tremble!

GRIMGERDA (*aside*). Ha! Strength! strength! Great strength! Good; thou shalt serve a still greater cunning.

[*ALOUD*.]

Kumba! To what purpose this childish insolence and defiance? Why wilt thou provoke only an increase of thy misery? Be quiet, be obedient, and I both can and will keep thee.

KUMBA. Ah, say how! Pardon my defiance, O Grimgerda. I am still and obedient. Speak, speak!

GRIMGERDA. All the torments of thy soul proceed from this, that thou standest on the half-way. The escape from thy misery is called *completion*!

KUMBA. Speak more plainly.

GRIMGERDA. Enter fully and for ever into my service. The first matter which I will give thee to complete shall be the ratification of our compact.

KUMBA. And what shall be my reward?

GRIMGERDA. Thou shall acquire great power already in this life. After death, I will awake thee, and doubly great power shall be given thee to injure the great on the earth, for no power exceeds that of the departed spirit. Thou shalt become as one of mine own, as one of the mighty Disor which thou hast seen around me.

KUMBA. Have they peace?

GRIMGERDA. Observe them.

KUMBA. I see no pain in their features. There seems to play over their sallow lips a smile; but it is not glad. The countenances of some appear restless, and yet on the point of being changed into stone.

GRIMGERDA. Thou seest them now in their twilight costumes, in their night mantles, in which they recently made a journey into the world of men. But they do not always appear thus dim. When I will it, they glitter in their holi-

day attire, and at my beck a splendour surrounds them which surpasses that of the temple of Upsala. See for thyself.

[*The Sorceress waves a wand, and the Cave all over appears as beaming with gold. The Witch and the Disor are seen in splendid dresses, and with jewelled crowns on their heads. After a pause, GRIMGERDA speaks.*

Now, what thinkest thou ?

KUMBA. That is grand ! (*aside.*) But they are none the handsomer for it.

GRIMGERDA. What sayest thou ?

KUMBA. I say that is grand !

GRIMGERDA. Yes, I think so. The like shall not be seen in the dwelling of the most ostentatious Jarl.

[*She makes another sign with the staff, and the splendour disappears.*

KUMBA. But it seemed to me that the gold was red as glowing fire, and that I saw lizards and spiders running about amongst the precious stones.

GRIMGERDA. That is because thou art unaccustomed to such pomp ; and therefore it causes, as it were, spiders' webs before thy eyes. But not only splendour and affluence are here offered by us, but jey too ; and thou mayst well believe that it goes often right merrily here. Here one knows neither anguish nor remorse. Here we eat and drink well, —sleep when we will ; and between whiles, dance and frisk to our hearts' content. Thou shalt have a specimen.

[*GRIMGERDA blows a horn. The Cave seems at once to become alive. Black-Elves, Dwarfs, and Spirits swarm forth, and riot about in a wild dance.*

KUMBA (*aside*). Afgrund's music to Afgrund's dance. Is this joy ? No, it is frenzy !

(*Aloud to the Imps, that will drag her into the dance.*)

Away from me, ye wild beasts ! ye foul hobgoblins ! I have no desire for your joy. Grimgerda, let the tasteless dance have an end. It is irksome.

GRIMGERDA. It is not so easy to compel them to cease when they are become well heated in the dance. Cold water must then be had recourse to.

[*She strikes with the witch-wand on the rocks. Streams of water spring forth upon the dancing goblins, who fly, howling and hurrying, terrified into their dens. The Witch laughs.*

GRIMGERDA. This merriment moves thee not, because thou art unused to it. But ask my imps whether they think the dance tedious. When thou hast been some time with us, thou wilt find it as delightful as they do.

KUMBA (*sighs*).

GRIMGERDA. Well, bondmaiden, has thou a desire to become free in my service?

KUMBA (*indignantly*). Like one of these?

GRIMGERDA. No, freer. Listen, Kumba. I mean well by thee, and have something great in store for thee. I have discovered in thee a higher power than exists in all those who are about me, a power worthy of mine. I will give thee a commission, which an ordinary spirit could not accomplish. If thou executest it according to my instructions, the torment in thy bosom shall not only cease for ever, but I will regard thee as my daughter. Thou shalt partake of my wealth; and thy power to injure the great, and to command the low, shall become like mine. Thou shalt partake with me my dwelling; and when thou wilt, thou shalt change it into a gorgeous palace, and adorn thyself with

KUMBA. Let us make the business short. At what price wilt thou have my soul?

GRIMGERDA. Listen! and observe well my words. In the strongly-fortified castle, on the other side of the water, dwells a Jarl, named Harald Sigurdson

KUMBA. I know him. A handsome, and a brave man, and a friend of King Dag.

GRIMGERDA. I hate him; but still more fiercely do I hate his wife, the proud Herborg.

KUMBA. Very well.

GRIMGERDA. They have a child—a boy of three years old. His parents' greatest delight.

KUMBA. That beautiful child I have carried in my arms!

GRIMGERDA. Thou shalt kill that child.

KUMBA. I?—A little child?

GRIMGERDA. And before its heart's-blood cools, thou shalt—drink it.

KUMBA. Detestable!

GRIMGERDA. That only can for ever take away thy soul's sickness.

KUMBA. No, no! I cannot do it.

GRIMGERDA. By this means only canst thou acquire my friendship, and participate in my affluence and my power; by this alone can the bondwoman's daughter become a free and mighty being.

KUMBA. Great gods preserve me!

GRIMGERDA. Dost thou imagine that the gods will trouble themselves about thee? But I understand thy remorse, Kumba. Nature shudders at extraordinary deeds; but it is precisely this which separates the strong from the despicable spirit,—the power to conquer the weakness of nature.

KUMBA. Short and good, I will not do it! Do with me what thou wilt—I do it not!

GRIMGERDA. Do it not? Do it not? We will see that! Thou shalt, thou must, thou shalt! Thou goest not hence alive, if thou refusest to do it.

KUMBA. Let thy wolves rend me to pieces,—I will not do it. My hate, impelled by wild passions, I could seek to gratify; but an innocent child, which never offended me—no! so fallen I am not. Thanks, Grimgerda, that thou restorest my strength. I can now, miserable as I am, detest and despise thy treasures.

GRIMGERDA. Art thou proud of thy cowardice? Offspring of wretches, go! Thou art not worthy to be near the sorceress. Go, paltry one, and remain the slave of the Jarls.

KUMBA. Better that, than to be like thee.

GRIMGERDA. Wretch! dost thou exalt thyself above me? Miserable, cowardly murderer! who hast not the strength to resist evil, hast not the courage to be strong in crime. Contemptible slave, begone! My wolves would loathe thy spongy carcase! Go! but bear with thee the curse which I announce to thee—“Thou shalt neither find rest here, nor hereafter! Vacillating, dizzy, wavering, thou shalt wander about from morrow to morrow, and wear away thy life in anguish. Thou shalt wither as the thistle withers in the narrow clefts of the rocks. Thou shalt faint in the desert like the hunted wolf, and the sons of lamentation shall extend to thee a bitter drink of the poisonous tears of regret. After death shall thy dastard soul reside amid the fog in the marshes of the corpse-coast, and in vain shalt thou attempt to lift thyself out of it to the high land. In vain shalt thou stretch forth thy shadowy arms to embrace a creature that can love thee. Alone and

miserable, shalt thou be tossed about by the wind, and seek earth's abodes only to terrify the innocent child which loses itself in thy neighbourhood ; and thy life and thy being shall be—unblissedness!"

KUMBA (*coldly*). Thou tellest only what I already know. Hast thou no better curse, witch ?

GRIMGERDA. Yes, I have ; and though it costs me dear, it shall be pronounced—to crush thee. Know then, Kumba, that there is *one* who could save thee ; who could give thee rest here on the earth, and after death bear up thy spirit to a glorious lot in the everlasting light—yes ; if thou hadst sacrificed to him thy presumption, thy revenge, thy hate, as he desired of thee. But against him hast thou raved ; the deliverer hast thou cast from thee, and eternally hereafter shall his shape haunt thee, punishing and avenging—Behold him, and tremble !

[GRIMGERDA waves her magic wand, and pronounces the following words with great exertion and with averted face.

Thou whom I saw with the pale Hel ! Thou whose countenance I cannot endure to behold !—White god without spot, without malice ! Darling of the creator ! Balder the good ! Thee do I evoke to the circle of the earth ! Thee do I call in the might of the powers of Afgrund to appear upon this spot, in order to avenge thyself ! In the awful name of the eternal justice—

A bright light fills the bottom of the Cave. In the midst of it appears the beautiful shape of a youth, full of majesty and mildness, who fixes on KUMBA a severe and painful look. GRIMGERDA remains standing, but with averted head, as if turned to stone. KUMBA gives a piercing shriek of inexpressible agony, and falls with outstretched arms on the earth. The scene vanishes ; all becomes dark again, and a shrill laugh of mockery is raised by the Goblins who come into active motion.

SCENE VII.—FRID reclines in a half-sitting posture on a splendid Couch near the window. KUMBA stands at her feet and contemplates her. The sun is going down.

FRID. Soon—soon will all be over ! Soon shall I journey to the second light. For the last time do I bow my head

before thee, O earth's glorious sun ! Thanks that thou yet a while wilt warm my bosom with thy beams. Thanks for this last friendly caress. I see, but I feel it not. My life's sun also goes down, but the peace of even has descended on my heart, and I feel it—it is beautiful to die ! Ah ! even in death my dim gaze turns towards the sea, and looks earnestly for the sail of the beloved, and calls him hence. But when he comes, he will no more find his bride. She has gone away, but merely the better to follow and serve him. My soul is reconciled to death.

KUMBA (*aside*). That which stirs within me no mortal can comprehend.

FRID. Yes, my spirit is reconciled ; all murmuring, all complaint, is departed. Mine eye, indeed, is dim ; but one thing is yet clear and certain to me—death will not destroy my love, will not separate me from the beloved. See, there shines already in the cloud Asabron, surrounded by the roarings of the heavenly water. Welcome to me, O sign of the favour of the gods, which shows me the way that I shall travel. I come quickly ! All-Father ! I am ready, for I am at peace with heaven, at peace with the earth !

KUMBA (*aside*). How bright she grows ! How I blacken ! Woe ! I hate her no longer. Hate has turned its point against myself.

FRID. Kumba ! My faithful attendant ! Thanks for the affection thou hast shown me on earth. Take this costly jewel in remembrance of me. Be free, Kumba ; be rich and happy !

KUMBA. Daughter of kings, I desire only one thing of thee.

FRID. And what ?

KUMBA. Thy hatred. Know that thou diest by my hand ; by the poison received from the bondmaiden. Know that she, like a snake, bit fast into thy heart, and sucked pleasure from thy torments ; know that she long hated thee

FRID. Almighty gods ! Thou, Kumba ? Ah, wherefore ?

KUMBA. For thy happiness ; for thy beauty ; for thy union with King Dag, whom I love ; for the injustice of the gods, who gave thee all, and me nothing ; for the pangs which envy and jealousy occasioned me ! For all this have I hated thee, and taken revenge.

FRID. O Kumba ! Kumba ! Thou couldst think thus of me ; and I held thee so dear, and put such trust in thee.

KUMBA. I have deceived thee. This hand has murdered thee. Abhor me; hate me!

FRID. I sink into the All-Father's embrace. Thy hand gave me poison; but a higher hand has sealed my doom. I have gained by it, for I know that life and love will continue beyond death. For myself I complain no more, but for thee my soul sorroweth. Before I go, take my forgiveness.

KUMBA. Canst thou *forgive* me?

FRID. O Kumba, hate not; I cannot hate, and therefore has my soul peace; but bitterness only is a torment in death. Thou hast not done me much wrong, Kumba! Thy mind was exasperated,—I understand it now. Pardon me, that in thy presence I was so happy, and did not notice thy suffering! Nay,—gaze not so wildly upon me;—give me thy hand. Let a tear of reconciliation moisten thine eye. Thou wert unhappy. That was the fault.

KUMBA (*aside*). Exists goodness so great, love so unbounded? Woe is me! What have I done? My heart will burst!

FRID. Thy lips move wildly, but I hear no sound. Dost thou remember, Kumba, the years of our childhood? Rememberest thou, when thou first came to me wounded, mishandled. These hands healed thy wounds, these eyes wept over thee. I loved thee at that moment, and I have loved thee ever since,—and now my spirit cannot depart in peace if thou hatest me. A stern power of witchcraft must have bound up thy heart. But thou shalt not thus harden thyself. Come nearer, Kumba, I will yet once more weep over thee.

KUMBA. Thou has transpierced me! Behold me at thy feet. Hear my last prayer!

FRID. My Kumba! speak.

KUMBA. Let me die with thee. Let the same pile which sends thy soul on high, bear also to the other world that of thy guilty servant. In the realm of shadows I will slave for thee.

FRID. Follow me in death. The God of gods will then determine our fate. Perhaps in a higher light, the daughter of kings and the bondmaiden are merely empty names. Let thy soul cling to mine; never was it nearer to me. We will both watch over him, whom we both loved.

KUMBA. O these tears! they are a transport. Let me bathe thy hand with them.

FRID. Bathe my hand with them ; they warm my heart.
O look out on the sea, Kumba !

KUMBA. Gods ! it is he !

FRID. He comes ! Methought that was his white flag . . .
my eyes are dim. He comes !

KUMBA. Thou wilt not see him ! Thou diest ! O thou
must, must hate me !

FRID. No . . . I forgive thee. Forgive thyself !

KUMBA. Now ! thou diest !

FRID (*with arms extended towards the sea*). I go . . . to
the second light ! Thou, O my Dag, never shall I see thee
again ! [She dies.

KUMBA. Dead ? Yes, dead ! It is over ! I will die also.
Powers of vengeance, your judgment is upon me. She par-
doned me, but can you pardon ? In your hands I leave my
guilty soul. Mighty Thor, accept the offering ; and if with
wild wings thou pursue round the earth my peace-abandoned
soul, I will not sigh, I will not complain ! I have deserved
it. But one day—I know it—comes a greater than thou ! . . .
Will he take compassion on me ? Will he permit the re-
pentant spirit to find a quiet shore ? . . . O, can there be
pardon ? can there be atonement ?

[She sinks down at the foot of FRID's bed.

LOW AND DISTANT CHORUS OF SPIRITS OF LIGHT.

From the depths, and
From the heights, will
There be heard a voice,
That to captive and to mourner
Shall proclaim—"Rejoice!"

Dumb shall grow each
Elfin chorus,
But in heaven's acclaim—
Loftier spirits
Shall adore the
World-Redeemer's name.

THE END.

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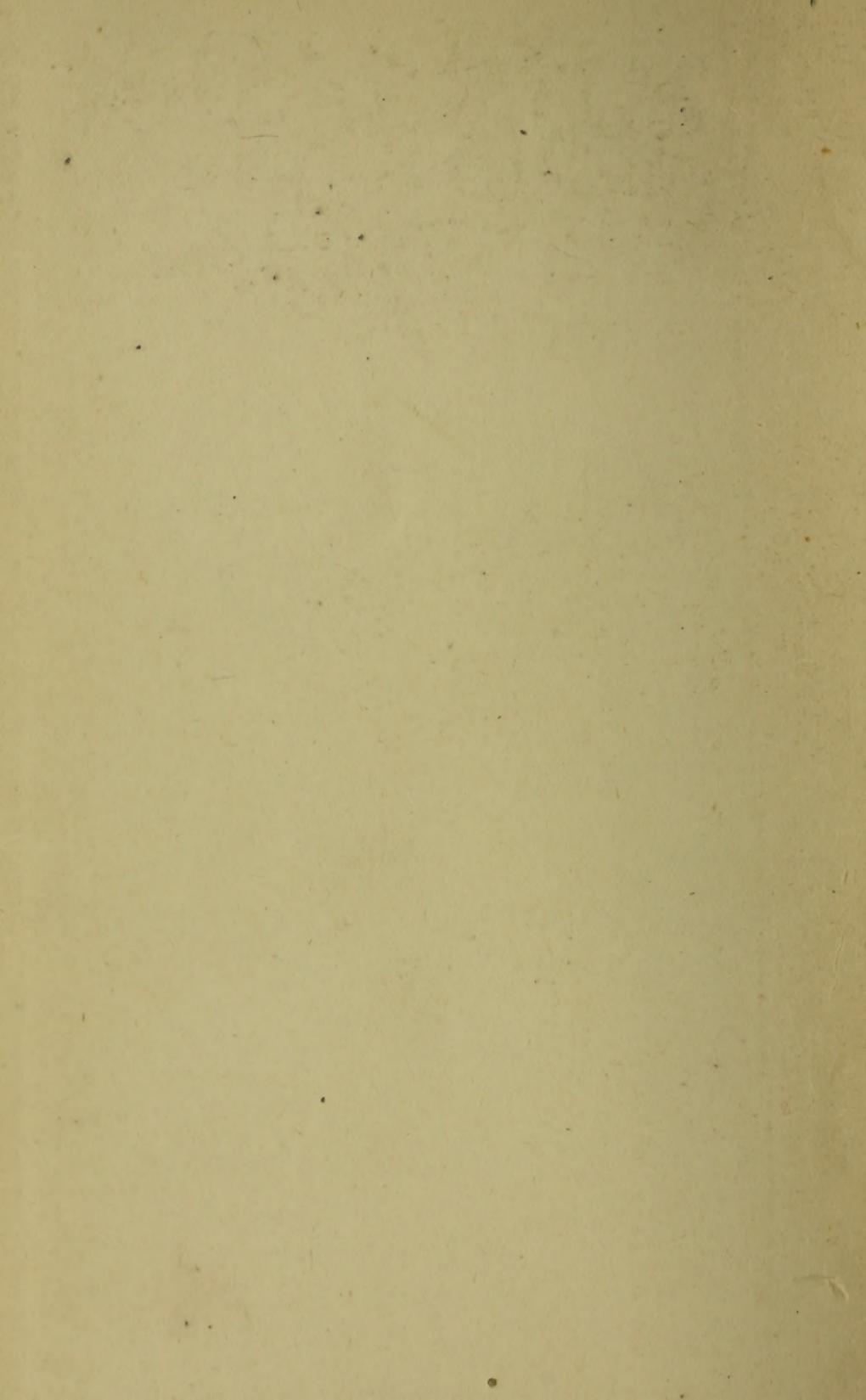
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